ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

By C. S.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE writer of these notes would strongly recommend a close, prayerful study of this epistle, as the groundwork of all scriptural knowledge. Well does he remember the benefit he derived, for nearly two years, in laying aside all other reading, and studying this epistle, with a few others, when young, about forty years ago.

We cannot be surprised that it should contain such solid foundation-truth, when we bear in mind that it was written to the assembly in the then metropolis of the whole world.

It is important, and really helpful, in reading any of the precious epistles or books of holy scripture, to observe the character and design of each book, and also the order and divisions in the same. The object the Spirit had in this epistle, then, was evidently to reveal the relationship of God to man, and man to God—the way God could be righteous in justifying man. Thus it is the foundation of all truth.

The careful reader will at once see the three divisions of the epistle. Chapters i. to viii. reveal God, the Justifier; the gospel of God to Jews and Gentiles alike—the same grace to each. Chapters ix. to xi. shew that God has not forgotten His promises to Israel, but that, at the appointed time, all shall be fulfilled to them as a nation. Chapters xii. to the end contain the preceptive part.

There is, however, a subdivision in the first eight chapters of great importance. Up to chapter v. 11 it is the question of justification from SINS; then, on to the end of chapter viii., it is more the question of justification and deliverance from SIN. We will now turn to chapter i.

CHAPTER I.

"PAUL, a bond servant of Jesus Christ." He was not a bond servant of any society or party, but of Jesus Christ. How few can follow Paul in these seven words, and yet how important it should be so, if service is to be acceptable to Christ! Have you thought of this as to the whole course of your life and service? It will make all the difference in the day of reward. "Called *to be* an apostle" should be, "an apostle by calling." When the Lord Jesus called him, it was not that he might go to the other apostles, and be educated, or prepared, or ordained to be an apostle; no, he was constituted an apostle at once, and without any human authority whatever; he was called to act and preach as an apostle because he was one, not that he might be one. (Compare Acts xxvi. 15–19; Gal. i. 10–16.) Thus Paul was "separated unto the gospel of God." Well did the Holy Ghost know how all this would be entirely reversed in that very Rome. Yes, this very first verse is of the utmost moment to us, if we would do the will of God. Remember, Paul had been an apostle for some time when the Holy Ghost separated him, and sent him to a special tour of service, with the approval of the elders, in Acts xiii. 1–4.

Here, then, we see Paul a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, an apostle by calling, separated unto the gospel of God. Now this word, "separated," goes a great way. Separated from the world, and from the law, from Judaism, unto the glorious good news of God. It is not the subject of the church in this epistle, but the gospel of God. The church was not the subject of promise, but the gospel was. ("Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.") Yes, the scriptures, from Genesis iii., contain abundant promises of the gospel of God, "concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Every promise thus looked on to the seed, which is Christ. It will be well to lay hold of this. The gospel is not concerning our feelings or doings, but "concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." May that blessed One be ever the beginning and the end of the gospel of God which we preach!

There are just two parts, then, in the true gospel: the work accomplished by Jesus in the flesh; and His resurrection from the dead. "Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." In Him, as Son of David, all promise was fulfilled. What a manifestation of the love of God—the Holy One to be made flesh, to become truly man—to come down from His own eternal glory into the midst of a fallen, guilty race, under sin and judgment, and in that state of sinless humanity to go on to the cross!—Himself all

pure, and yet to be made sin, to bear its utmost judgment unto death; yea, to go down into death itself, and deliver us from its rightful power—to be delivered for our iniquities. This we shall find to be one great theme of our epistle—the atoning death of Jesus, in its double aspect of propitiation and substitution. But though made man in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet not Himself in fallen humanity or sinful humanity—not Himself defiled. He was ever the Holy One of God, and was thus determined, or "declared the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

Let us, then, behold the Son of God, pure and undefiled all along His path below; not only His blessed acts, but His nature, holy, according to the Spirit of holiness. Thus, though in the midst of evil, come there in love; for us entering in sympathy into all the sorrow sin has brought; and tempted from without in all points as we are, but in Himself, His holy nature was entirely apart from sin. All this was declared in that, having accomplished our redemption, God raised Him from among the dead. Personally death had no claim on Him—He could not be holden by it. Since He was according to the Spirit of holiness, God in righteousness must raise Him from among the dead, and receive Him to glory. He had glorified God in human nature, and as man He is now raised *from* the dead, according to the Spirit

of holiness; and there is now in heaven the Man who has glorified God. It is well to be clear as to what He is in Himself, and then we shall better understand what He has done for us, and what He is for us raised from the dead. These truths we hope to notice more fully further on.

From this Holy One raised from the dead, Paul had "received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name." It is important to notice this; whatever he was as an apostle, it was all grace received. Did not the Lord shine across his path, in pure, free favour, at the very moment he was mad—yea, exceeding mad—against Christ? Did He not call him, and make him His chosen apostle to the Gentiles at once, in free, unmerited favour? Is it not the same in principle in every case? Whatever service we may have for Christ, is it not the same grace, the same free favour? Thus the apostle looked upon the saints at Rome. The same grace had been shewn to them. "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ." Thus grace shines out in all its fulness. He who met Saul on his way to Damascus, even Jesus Christ as Lord, had also called every believer in Rome. "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The two little words introduced by the translators, "called *to be* saints," completely changes

the meaning of this important scripture, and has been the cause of serious mistakes in the question of holiness. It is the same word as is used in the first verse, "called an apostle ;" or, "an apostle by calling." As the word, saint, means holy one, so the words mean, "holy ones by calling." Not called to seek to attain to holiness—the common mistake—but just as Paul was constituted an apostle by the Lord who called him, so all believers in Rome were constituted holy ones by calling. This was the ground on which they were exhorted to walk in accordance with what they were. Every believer is a saint by calling, holy by calling. He is born of God, partaker of the divine nature, which is holy. By new birth he is holy. He is dead with Christ, risen in Christ—yea, Christ who has passed through death, and is the resurrection and the life, is his life. "He that hath the Son, hath life." Now, if he has the life of the Holy One of God, that life of which he is now a partaker is as holy as it is eternal. All believers have eternal life, therefore all believers have a holy life. To seek by any means to attain to one or the other for acceptance, is to totally misunderstand our calling and high privileges.

All scripture bears out this truth. The exhortation to be holy is on this principle: "As OBEDIENT CHILDREN . . . . as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy."

(1 Pet. i. 14.) Yes, it is because they are begotten again unto a lively hope: kept by the power of God, because they are born of God; as children, having purified their souls in obeying the truth. In a word, as they were holy by calling and nature, and having the Holy Ghost, they were to give all diligence to be holy in life and conversation.

John brings out the holiness of the new nature as born of God. He that is born of God does not practise sin. In each epistle the holy calling will be found first, and holy walk, as the result, follows. (Compare 1 Thess. i. 1, with chap. v. 23.) It is important to notice the place the word has, applied by the Holy Ghost, both as to the new birth, and also in practical holiness. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James i. 18.) "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." How sad it is in this day to see all this set aside, and men by thousands seeking to be holy by sacraments and ceremonies; and not only they, but many who write and teach on holiness entirely overlook what every Christian is constituted by calling and new birth, and the indwelling of the Spirit. There is no doubt this is the cause of great weakness and mistake and low walk.

Let us not lightly pass over those other precious words: "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." What a change from Judaism!—the free favour of God

our FATHER, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and peace to all the beloved of God in Rome. Do our souls enter into this? Instead of law justly requiring perfect obedience from man, now we have perfect peace with God, on the principle of free, unmerited favour. Israel, if faithful, could only have known God as Jehovah; we know Him as Father. We shall see in this epistle how His grace and peace can flow out to us unhindered in perfect righteousness.

As this epistle reveals the ground of a sinner's standing before God, we notice that the first thing for which the apostle gives thanks to God, through Jesus Christ, for them all, is this: "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Thus faith has the first place. Beloved reader, is your faith well known, or is it doubtful whether you really believe God? This is the first point to be settled; all will follow in order after that. We shall find that if you believe God, then you can say, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Can you with confidence say so? Then drink of that stream of grace and peace ever flowing from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

What real heart work it was with Paul! He says, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." What deep love to those he had never

seen! This was no mere outward service, but "with my spirit." All done to God in the gospel of His Son. Is it so with us, or mere cold imitation? Was not this the secret of Paul's success? If lacking with us, must there not be failure? Paul greatly longed to see the saints at Rome, but hitherto he had been hindered. We see here proof of the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. Had Paul or Peter founded the assembly at Rome, what a plea this would have been for so-called apostolic succession! There is no evidence as to whom the Holy Ghost used in the forming of that important assembly. No evidence that any apostle had been there at this time, though the faith of this assembly, or rather of all the called saints, was thus spoken of and well known. It is also remarkable, they are not addressed as the church at Rome, as in other epistles.

Paul desired to have mutual fellowship with them, and to bear some fruit amongst them, whether this might be in the conversion of souls, or in the imparting of some spiritual gift to those already brought to Christ. Having so great a treasure committed to him as the gospel, he felt himself a debtor to impart it to all, both Jews and Gentiles. He could say, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." What entire readiness, yet the most real dependence on God alone. Had he been the servant of men, he might have needed a call

from them to preach at Rome, or have a human appointment of some sort: but there is no such thought. Why should it not be so now? If we had more divine energy it would be so. Paul could say, "I am ready." Yes, yes, the world behind his back: "I am ready as soon as my God shall open the way." Oh, where are Paul's successors? May our God awaken us by the consideration of the path of this devoted bond-slave of God.

We now begin to approach the question as to what the gospel is. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The reason why he is not ashamed of the gospel is stated clearly. The law commanded, but had no power to deliver from sin; nay, it was given that, not sin, but the offence might abound. But, in direct contrast, the gospel is the power (not of man, but) of God unto salvation. There is a vast meaning in this. We will seek to make this plain to our young readers by a few illustrations.

You may have read and heard much that undermines this truth; for there is much preaching that tells the sinner that he must give up his sins, and forsake them before he can come to God and get forgiveness of sins and salvation. This looks very reasonable and plausible. Take this illustration. Let us take our stand a little above the Niagara falls. How calmly the mighty river flows

on! smooth as glass to look at, and the nearer the falls the smoother it flows along. A boat is seen gliding down amid stream. There are two men in it. They hear the every-moment increasing roar of the fearful falls. One is awake to his danger: a few minutes and the boat must be over. The other seems stupefied. Both are alike helpless; both in the same boat rushing on so smoothly to utter destruction. Now hail them; try the gospel of man. Tell them to forsake that boat; to give up that mighty river; to come to the bank or shore before they are over, and you will help them! Man, you tell them to do the impossible. Is it not only to mock them? Is it not cruel thus to mock them? One, two minutes and they are over. What is needed is power to save them.

Is not the sinner on the stream of time, hasting to far worse destruction? Yes, he says, The power of sin carries me along. He awakes to his danger, death and judgment close at hand. He hears the roar; but can he save himself? Can he leave the river? If he can, he does not need a saviour. It would be glad tidings to that man, gliding on the fatal stream, to hail him and assure him there was One ready and able to save him to the uttermost. Yes, and thus God speaks to the helpless, guilty, perishing sinner, as we shall find further on: "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Take another illustration. You hear the sudden

cry of Fire, fire! You have not proceeded more than a few yards, and you see a house on fire. Flames issue from all the windows on the lower basement. There are some persons known to be in the fourth story, and they are either asleep or stupefied with smoke. If they have power to escape, there is no need of the fire escape. The ladder is placed against the upper window. Now watch that bold and able fireman. What does he do? Does he merely tell the inmates that they must first leave the burning house, and then he will save them? He mounts the ladder, breaks in the window, and enters the scene of danger. He brings them out: they are saved. It is the same in a storm at sea. The helpless wreck is drifting fast to utter destruction, carrying its helpless crew. What would be the use of a life-boat, if the captain remained on shore, telling the perishing men that they must first leave and give up the wreck, and come to shore, and then the life-boat would save them? Such is the gospel of man. Man must save himself; and then Christ will save him. And strange to say, men love and accept such folly as this. Now the gospel of God is the very opposite of this: He sent His beloved Son to seek and to save that which was *lost*. Yes, *lost*, as those even in the boat, so near the roaring falls of the river. *Lost*, as the inmates in a burning house. *Lost*, as those sailors drifting on the wreck. Yes, if men only knew, and owned their lost and helpless con-

dition, they must then own that gospel to be utter folly that bids them save themselves, and that then God will save them.

Take only one more illustration. A man has been tried and found guilty. He is under judgment, locked up securely in the condemned cell. Would you tell him to come out of that cell ; to give up his sins and his chains, and the prison, and the sentence already passed on him ; and then, but not till then, would he be pardoned? Would it not be cruel mockery to a man in his condition? This is the sinner's real condition, and therefore "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the *power* of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." The question to one who discovers he is gliding helplessly on to the falls, or the rocks, or is a guilty sinner under judgment, without strength, to such, the question is this, How can I be saved? How can I, a condemned sinner, be justified?

This then is the very question taken up and explained in this first section of the Epistle. Yea, the very reason why Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. "For THEREIN is the righteousness of God revealed from faith [or, on the principle of faith] to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith." It is not righteousness of man, for he has none. How can he have any if he is guilty—under judgment? And if he had, it would be righteousness of man, not of God.

We shall find the righteousness of God to be in

direct contrast to righteousness of man. Neither can it be by law, for God cannot be under the law. He was the law-giver. Had it said "the righteousness of Christ," that would have been another truth. But it is righteousness of God revealed, in the gospel, on the principle of faith, to faith. It was announced repeatedly in the Old Testament, but now explained, or revealed. "And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." (Isa. xlv. 21–24.) "In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." (Ps. lxxxix. 16.)

Let it be noticed that the righteousness of God is the first and great question in our epistle. It is the first subject, and then the love of God. For the love of God will not meet the wrath of God. The question of righteousness is at once raised. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. That wrath is not yet executed, but there can be no doubt of the wrath of God against all the wickedness of men—against sin. It was seen at the flood; in the destruction of Sodom; and on the Holy One made sin for us. It is also revealed that He is coming in judgment, taking vengeance. The wicked will surely be cast into the lake of fire. And am I a

guilty sinner? Then what would the love of God alone avail me in the day of righteous wrath against all ungodliness? It must then be evident that the first great question is the righteousness of God in justifying him that believeth. How can God be righteous in accounting such a sinner as I righteous before Him? What a question!

This question, the righteousness of God, is taken up again in chapter iii. 21. What then is the object of the Spirit in this large portion of scripture, from chapter i. 17 to iii. 21? Is it not chiefly, in utterly setting aside all pretension of righteousness in man, whether without law, or under law? This must be done, for man will cling to nothing like the efforts to establish his own righteousness. Therefore every claim of man is examined. The eternal power of God was manifested in creation, and again in the flood. God was certainly known to Noah and his descendants. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." In a word, they sank into idolatry. They apostatised from God until God gave them up. This is repeated thrice. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness," &c. (ver. 24); "For this cause God gave them up to vile affections" (ver. 26); "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind," &c. (Ver. 28.) Read the terrible catalogue of wickedness into which the whole Gentile world sank. Where then

was righteousness of man? To be given up is the act of God in judicial judgment. He thus gave up the Gentiles, and we see what man became. We also know that when the Jews had fully rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost, God gave them up, for the present, as a people. Such also will be the end of professing Christendom, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 10.) The fact then that God gave up the Gentiles to the fearful lusts of their hearts, proves their utter apostasy from God. And all profane history corroborates this inspired description of human wickedness.

It may be asked, but were there not rulers, kings, and magistrates, who made laws against wickedness, and punished crime? "Who knowing the judgments of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Thus then, as now, the greatest wickedness is found in the rulers or chiefs. For proof we have only to read any of the ancient historians. If man is left to himself, the greater power he has, the greater is his wickedness. It is overwhelming to contemplate the cruelty and dreadful wickedness of heathenism. Such was that world to whom God

in mercy sent His Son. In the Gentile world righteousness was not to be found. Multitudes rushed together in amphitheatres to feast their eyes on cruel wickedness.

CHAPTER II.

Conscience leaves man without excuse. There is in man a sense of responsibility, and, through the fall, a knowledge of good and evil. The fact that one man judges another is a proof of this: "For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." How true this is, whether of Jew, Gentile, or professing Christian! And man cannot deceive God. "But we are sure the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" What a solemn question! We may judge and punish others for wicked acts in this world, but if we ourselves have to be brought, with all our sins, into judgment—and judgment is sure to come, and be according to truth—how are we to escape? The punishment of evil amongst all nations proves that we admit that evil ought to be punished. The righteous government of God demands, then, that after death there shall be the judgment. Do look at this question. Reader, dost thou think thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing

that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" How many are doing this? Indeed, the way in which repentance is preached tends to lead men to despise and ignore the wondrous grace of God altogether. Many preach repentance as works for salvation, as preceding faith in the riches of the goodness of God. Now it is as we know and believe the goodness of God in sending His beloved Son to die for our sins, that this leads us to, produces in us, repentance—indeed, we can only know the depths of our sin and guilt by knowing the depths into which He had to descend to save us. Thus the goodness of God leads to an entire change of mind; the full judgment of ourselves, in deep abhorrence of our sins, and full confession of them to God; and, at the same time, an entire change of mind about God. Thus, the difference between truth and error is this: it is not our repentance that leads to, or causes, the goodness of God to us, but it is the goodness of God that leads to, and causes, repentance in us. Oh, beware lest thou shouldst so despise the grace of God, and, "after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Mark, it must be either the goodness of God *now*, and repentance *here*, or the righteous judgment of God in that coming day of wrath hereafter.

Some have had difficulty in understanding

chapter ii. 6–29; others have perverted these statements, as though they taught salvation by works. This would be in direct contradiction of the whole teaching of the epistle. What, then, do we learn here?

First, the righteousness of God, in His reward to the Jew under law, or the Gentile not under law. This is distinctly and fully stated. Then, secondly, the inquiry, Are there any Jews or Gentiles who answer to these requirements of God, and can thus be rewarded?

We start, then, with the certainty that, in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, He "will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life," &c. Also, in like manner, in that day, "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil," &c. This, then, is the basis of righteous judgment on which God will act: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." The police go about the streets, and arrest men, and take them to be judged for public crimes; but is it not equally true that Death goes about the streets as God's policeman, to take men, who, after death, shall have every secret thing judged they have done? Can you stand in that searching judgment? God will judge in righteousness. "Tribulation and anguish

upon every soul of man that doeth evil." And all brought out—every hidden thing!

It is well to dwell on this. From that righteous judgment there will THEN be no escape. Man, when left to himself, sank into doing evil continually; as we have seen, the whole Gentile world had sunk into the grossest sin. What, then, of the Jew, the religious man? Yes, the religious man, is he not superior every way? He rests in the law, boasts of God—the only true God. He knows His will, is instructed, and is an instructor, a confident guide of the blind. Now, if he knows the will of God, and does it. and has the law, and keeps it, will not this give him boldness in the day of righteous judgment? But if he is not a doer of good, if he is a breaker of the law, what better is he than the Gentile who has not the law? Nay, he is even found to be worse. How, then, can the Jew under law meet God in judgment?

And, reader, if this is your position — a religious man under law, desiring most earnestly to keep it, and yet breaking it; knowing the will of God, and not doing it—how can you meet God in righteous judgment, and, however religious before men, to have every secret brought out in judgment? Do all your efforts give you confidence in looking forward to the day of certain judgment? The Jew had great advantage every way.

CHAPTER III.

He had the oracles of God; so have you. What an advantage to have the very inspired word of God! And the oracles of God were committed to them.

Verse 3. Let us notice here how remarkably faith is introduced again. Righteousness of God had always been on the principle of faith. "For what, if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" However the bulk of the nation had disbelieved, yet their unbelief and unrighteousness had not changed God—He remained the same; He remains true to the unchangeable principles of right and wrong; otherwise, how shall He judge the world? In setting aside the law as a means of acquiring righteousness, this might be perverted, as some did, and affirmed that the apostle taught that we might thus do evil that good might come. This is strongly condemned, the righteousness of God having been maintained in the judgment of all evil-doers. The apostle now appeals to the Jews' own scriptures, and from them proves that all are guilty: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God."

Verse 19. We cannot deny that these words were

written to those under the law. What a terrible description of man under law! Every mouth is thus stopped, and all the world stands guilty before God. Yes, mark, this is not what man is before his fellow-men, but what he is before God. And if all under law, and all not under law, are guilty, what can the law do for the guilty? Its very perfection as a perfect rule for man, can only condemn the breaker of the law. If a man has got false weights in his shop, what could the test of standard weights do but condemn him? The standard weights would shew how far he was short; but if short, could not shew that they were just weights. The law just did this, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Since, then, all are guilty, it is evident, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified IN HIS SIGHT."

Verse 21. Man is thus set aside, and all his efforts and pretensions to righteousness by works of law. "But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." This is altogether new, and distinct from everything that is of man. It is not the righteousness of man, for he has none. What a fact, that in all this world there was not one found righteous! No, not one. It is the righteousness of God, entirely and apart from the law—what God is in Himself, and what He is for man. Now God could not be righteous in justifying man

by the law, for the law could only condemn man. He was guilty. God was surely always righteous in his dealings with man—perfectly consistent with His own glory. But this is now manifested apart from law, though witnessed by law and prophets. This, then, is the revelation, "even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all, them that believe; for there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

How distinctly faith of Jesus Christ now takes the place of law, and this unto all, both Jews and Gentiles! The righteousness of God, then, is what He is in Himself, and what He is to us. It is apart from law; for there was, and could be, no law or command to God. All is absolutely of God. He so loved; He so gave His beloved Son that, through His sacrifice on the cross, He might be eternally righteous in justifying us, or accounting us righteous.

Verse 24. "Being justified freely by his grace." Yes, accounted righteous freely, without anything on our part, except believing Him—and even faith is the gift of God—it is by His free favour, grace. But how is God righteous in justifying us freely by His free favour, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"? Not merely—blessed as that is—justified from every charge of sins; not merely sheltered from judgment, like Israel in Egypt, by the blood of the Lamb; but redeemed,

fully delivered—redemption through His precious blood.

Well, you may say, that is all very blessed, but how am I to know that I have a share in it? How am I to be assured that it applies to me?

Well, since God is righteous in freely justifying us, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, let us inquire what that redemption is, and how you may know it is unto you, and applies to you. What is redemption? The emancipation, or redemption, of all the slaves in the West Indies, some years ago, will illustrate what redemption is. A vast sum was given, voted by the English government, for the complete redemption of the slaves. They were, so to speak, redeemed for ever—for ever emancipated, delivered from the wretchedness of slavery.

Now, when the proclamation, or glad tidings, of their redemption arrived in the West Indies, how were they to know it applied to them? Suppose an aged slave, with many a scar of whip and chain upon him, had inquired, in the following words: "Yes, I have no doubt so many millions have been paid—I have no doubt the proclamation of redemption, emancipation, everlasting deliverance, is good and glorious—but how am I to know it applies to me?" What would you have said? "Why, are you not a slave; are not those scars a proof of it? Were you not born a slave? If you were a free man, it could not apply to you,

but since you are a slave, it must, it does, apply to you; the proclamation is to you. Believing the proclamation, this moment you are, in perfect righteousness, for ever free." Would you not say so?

Ah, if we took our true place, and owned our true condition as born slaves, conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, then all difficulty would soon vanish as to seeing how redemption applies to us. Have you ever owned, do you own, that by nature you were the bond-slave of sin—sold under sin? The poor West Indian slave might possibly escape from his master, but have you not found yourself utterly without power to escape from Satan and sin? Have you any ugly scars of sin? If you think, bad as you are, that God will help you to keep the law, and so at last you hope to get to heaven; then you do not know your need of redemption. If the English government voted so much in the council of Parliament, what did God vote in the councils of eternity? Was it to give silver or gold for your redemption? It was to give His well-beloved Son. Yes, He is the ONE "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." Poor helpless slave of sin, that redemption is unto you. If you are such, then it must be unto you. Yes, the SLAVE that believed the proclamation was that moment for ever free. It is just so with you. God grant it to thousands who read this paper.

Dear young believer, it is most important to understand this: that you are not only justified freely (all sins being forgiven, God sees no iniquity), but you are also redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Yes, delivered from that state of slavery for ever. If that great sum of gold set the slaves free for ever, has not the infinite propitiation of Christ set us free, redeemed us for ever? Shall we allow a shadow of a doubt? No; He gave Himself for us — all free, unmerited favour. Not one thing did we do for our redemption; it was all accomplished before we had one desire or thought of redemption. And now we hear the glad tidings unto us poor slaves of sin; we believe, and are for ever free.

Glory, glory everlasting,
Be to Him who bore the cross.

But we must further inquire how the righteousness of God is affected by all this.

Verses 25, 26. "Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

You notice God hath set forth the propitiation of Christ to declare two things. His righteousness needed to be revealed in these two things.

His passing over, in forbearance, sins that are past; and that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Here we would warn our readers of a serious mistake, often found, as to "sins that are past," as though it meant sins that have been committed before our conversion to God; that sins up to that time are pardoned, or remitted, through the propitiation of Christ; that God would therefore be righteous, through the death of Christ, in thus pardoning past sins before conversion. This error leaves the believer in utter perplexity as to sins, should they be committed after conversion; indeed, this view leaves the Christian worse off than the Jew, as he had another day of atonement every year. But if the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ only met our sins, or atoned for sins, up to conversion, then there remains no sacrifice, no remedy, for sins after conversion. For "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Heb. x.) On this finite view of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who could be saved? The one infinite sacrifice must have met all the sins of a finite sinner, from first to last. What, then, does this scripture mean? Simply this: God had passed over, in forbearance, past sins, the sins of all believers before Christ died; and *now* He was the Justifier of all that believe, reckoned them as righteous, as though they had never sinned. But the great question was this: How could God be

righteous in doing both these things? How could this be revealed, declared, explained? Without an answer to this inquiry, how can any soul have peace with God?

If all had been guilty, how could God be righteous in passing over the sins of those who believed, whether Jews or Gentiles? And if all are proved guilty *now*—if you are proved guilty—how can God declare of you, like Israel of old, that He hath not beheld, and does not behold, iniquity in you? Clearly He could not be righteous on account of anything in us, or done by us, under law, or not under law. Here the eye of faith must rest solely on the blood of Jesus—"a propitiation, through faith in his blood." This alone explains, declares, the righteousness of God, both as to the sins of past believers, and ours now. Let us, however, remember, that on the propitiatory mercy-seat the blood was placed before the eye of God! "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." (Lev. xvi. 14.) This had to be done again; the blood of a bullock had to be sprinkled before God on that golden mercy-seat once every year. And blood of other victims had often to be shed. Not so the blood of Christ; that blood, once shed and sprinkled, can never be shed or sprinkled again.

Oh, my soul, think what that blood is for all thy sins before the eye of God! The blood, sprinkled on the gold, shews what the blood of Christ is, as meeting, upholding, declaring the righteousness of God. Yes, He was righteous in justifying David a thousand years before the blood was shed; just as He is righteous in justifying us eighteen hundred years after. Jesus must needs suffer for both.

Thus we see the great mistake of those who say, "The righteousness of God is that by which He maketh us righteous." No; the righteousness of God is that by which He Himself is righteous, in reckoning us poor sinners righteous. The difference is immense. If the voice of what calls itself the church says one thing, and the word of God says another thing, which must I believe? Doubtless the latter.

"Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Dwell on each sentence. Is it not the righteousness of God that He might be just? Do you believe in Jesus—that He has thus glorified God by His expiatory sacrifice—that now, at this time, through that death, He is in righteousness able to justify all that believe? Is God thus

revealed to your soul *just* in reckoning you righteous?

Since righteousness therefore is wholly of God, hrough the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, "where is boasting then?" Is it on the principle of works that we have done? No, such a thought is excluded. "By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith." For we have seen faith finds righteousness in God. I cannot, then, boast of having been, or being, righteous in myself, since we are proved guilty, and know it to be true, and, on the principle of works or law, we can only be condemned. Justification cannot be on that ground, however we may struggle to make it so.

Justification, then, must be on another principle. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." What else could scripture conclude, since all are guilty, and justification is not what we are to God, but what He is to us, set forth in Christ? Do not mix these two things together. Let your salvation be entirely on the principle of faith—what God is to you.

To be justified by faith is what God is to us through Christ. Deeds of the law are on the principle of what we are to God. Amazing grace! we are justified by the one, without the other. And in this the "no difference" doctrine is fully maintained. The same righteousness of God to

all, Jews or Gentiles, on the principle of faith, and by means of faith.

Those who maintain that we are still under the law, make it void, because it curses those under it, because they do not keep it. Those who were under it once had to be redeemed from its curse by the death of Jesus. Thus, if scripture put us under it again, then Jesus would need to die again to redeem us from its curse. (See Gal. iii. 10–13; iv. 4, 5.) "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish law." Jesus revealed to the eye of faith, bearing the curse of the broken law for those that were under it—if this does not establish the claims of the law of God, what could do so? But if we were put under it again, then its claims would have to be established again, or it would be made void.

CHAPTER IV.

We must bear in mind that we are not on the subject here of righteousness before men. On that subject we must turn to James. There we should find the question of justification from an entirely different point of view. A man is not justified before his fellow-men by faith, but by works, proving the genuineness of his faith. (See James ii. 18–26.)

It may now be fairly asked, If the whole human race has been found guilty before God—Jews and Gentiles—on what principle could any have been justified? Clearly, on the principle of law, that which condemns the guilty, none could have been justified, and two of the most remarkable cases are cited in proof. No less persons than Abraham, the very father of the Jews; and David, the sweet singer of Israel. The one was justified four hundred and thirty years before the law was given; the other, about five hundred years after, and that when he had merited its curse by fearful transgression.

As to Abraham, if any one could be justified by works, surely *he* could; and if he were before men, as in James, he had to glory, "but not before God." It is still the solemn question of man before God. Well, what saith the scripture about

this man, before the law was given to any one, even to him? "*Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.*" This is the scripture answer and principle how a man can be justified without the deeds of the law. Abraham believed God, and *it* (his *faith*) was reckoned *as*, not *for*, righteousness. Very much depends on the true meaning of the word, translated "imputed," "reckoned," and "counted," in this chapter, the same word in the original. It means reckoned as such, or esteemed so; it is not the word which is used to mean simply *imputed*, or set to the account of a person; that word is only found twice in the New Testament, in Romans v. 13: "But sin is not imputed when there is no law." It is not placed to the account of a person as transgression of law, when no law has been given which could thus be transgressed. It is more fully and correctly translated in Philemon 18: "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, *put that to my account*," impute it to me. Let us illustrate the two words. We say, Such a person has paid into a bank £500 to the account of another; it is set to his account. In the other case, a nobleman marries a poor woman. Is she reckoned poor after that? She has not a penny of her own right, but she is reckoned as rich as her husband, judicially accounted so, or reckoned so. Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned as righteousness. This may also be seen confirmed

in Abel. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts," &c. In both cases the principle of faith is the same. Abel believed God, and brought the sacrifice. Abraham believed God, Both were reckoned as righteous.

And this is not on the principle of works, not on the ground of what Abraham or Abel was to God, but God reckoned faith to them as righteousness. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned *as* righteousness."

I met an aged man the other day, with hair as white as snow, and said to him, "You have made a profession of Christ, more or less, for many years, and yet you do not know that you have eternal life, you are not sure you are justified, and if you should die, you have not the certainty that you would depart, and be with Christ." The poor aged countenance fell; he said, "It is all true." "Let me, then, tell you the reason of this. You have never yet seen God's starting-point. You have been striving all these years, more or less, to be godly, believing that God justifies the godly. You have never yet believed that God justified the ungodly; there is the starting-point. Godliness will come after. 'But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted as righteousness.'"

"I never saw that before," said the aged man. We ask you, reader, solemnly, Have you ever really seen this, and believed God that justifieth the *ungodly?* You may have striven long to take the place of a godly man before God by ordinances of men, and so-called good works, trying hard to falsify this scripture. Yes, it often takes a long life of failure to bring a soul to this true starting-place of *grace.* Certainly it must be on a different principle from law that God can justify the ungodly. To him that worketh not, but believeth.

Now let us have David's inspired explanation of this matter. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God reckoneth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin;" or, "to whom the Lord shall not at all reckon sin." It is not that they are reckoned righteous because they have never sinned, for all have sinned; but whose sins have been covered, whose iniquities have been forgiven. It is not, however, that their past sins only have been covered by the atoning death of Christ, but there is this further statement of infinite grace, and that in perfect righteousness, "The Lord shall not at all reckon sin." This is indeed marvellous, but in perfect harmony with all scripture.

Such is the efficacy of that one sacrifice, the value of the blood of Jesus, that it cleanseth from all sin. There needs no more sacrifice for sins—there is none; and God remembereth their sins, who are once purged, no more. (Heb. x.; 1 John i. 7.)

Thus, as to the reckoning of guilt, or sins, to the justified, they are reckoned righteous, as righteous as though they never had, and never did, sin. As to his standing before God, sin is not at all reckoned to the justified man; he is thus truly and continuously blessed. Will such love and righteousness as this, such eternal salvation, make the enjoyer of the blessing careless, and say, Let us, then, continue in sin that grace may abound? We shall see, as to that, further on. But is not this the very truth revealed here? It was utterly impossible for God to have justified the ungodly in this way, on the principle of law; but the propitiation, through the blood of God's eternal Son, explains the righteousness of God in thus not reckoning sins unto him that believeth.

It may, however, fairly be asked, Does that propitiation apply to the future as well as to past sins? That is exactly what scripture does teach, and, strange as it may seem, the knowledge of this very fact is made known to us that we may not sin. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ

the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 1, 2.) And in another place, speaking of believers: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," &c. (1 Pet. ii. 24.) And again: "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) Oh, wondrous grace--free grace! "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." He will not, He cannot, in righteousness reckon them to us. We shall see this still more fully explained as we go on. Reader, do you really believe God? Yes, the question is this, as we read these pages of the riches of His grace, Do we believe God? Remember we are yet only on the entrance ground, the very beginning of the gospel of God. Does then this blessedness come upon those under law only, that is the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised? Well, it was an undeniable fact, which the Jews at Rome could not deny, that faith was reckoned as righteousness to Abraham when he was uncircumcised long before the law was given. What an overwhelming argument then, that it must be all of grace and not of the law at all! And mark, he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being uncircumcised. That is, circumcision was a mark of his separation to God: he was the first person, the father of it; but mark, it had nothing to do with justifying him—he was reckoned

righteous first, entirely apart from all works or circumcision. Is it not so with every believer? His separation to God and a holy life, are a sign that he *has been reckoned righteous first,* apart from law or works. But God calls him and justifies him whilst ungodly. That is, it is there where God begins with man. Has He so begun with you, or are you seeking to be justified by works when you become godly?

Now another principle of great importance is brought out. PROMISE clearly depended alone on God, and this was given to Abraham long before the law; therefore it could not be through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. The covenant of Sinai was in direct contrast with promise: there the blessing depended on man's obedience, and he utterly failed to keep the covenant. Man could fail under covenant, and thus forfeit all claim on the ground of works; and he did fail. But God could not fail, therefore the promise still standeth sure, to all who believe. "Therefore [again] it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the PROMISE might be sure to all the seed," &c.

Thus Abraham believed the promise of God, because God could not fail. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was

reckoned to him as righteousness." He considered not his own body, &c. Now, such confidence as this in a covenant of works would have been confidence in himself, which would not have been faith, but presumption. His faith has unbounded confidence in God alone: in the promise of God. Therefore faith was reckoned as righteousness. He, even Abraham, was justified by faith, reckoned righteous before God. This was written after Abraham, even for us. For blessed as this was to Abraham to believe the promise of God, there is something still more blessed, "for us also, to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe [or, believing] on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Abraham believed the promise of God. We believe these two facts of God: the promise is fulfilled. We are thus reckoned righteous before God.

But it may be asked, Do not many still rest their soul's salvation on the promises? What would you say if a wife rested on the former promise of her husband for evidence, that she was his wife? Would not this shew that she was doubtful as to whether the marriage had really been accomplished or was valid; or, to say the least, that she did not understand it? Is it not something like this, when we try to rest on the promises? There must be some doubt or misunderstanding about these two accomplished facts before us. Doubtless

there are many precious promises on which we do well to rest. But this is not now a promise! Righteousness is reckoned to us, believing on Him, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. It is reckoned to us: that is not a promise. No, if we are believers the righteousness of God is upon us. We are reckoned righteous. Then the resurrection of our Lord is not now a matter of promise. God *has* raised Him from the dead. If not, there is no gospel, and we are yet in our sins. (See 1 Cor. xv. 14–17.)

Let us then proceed very carefully here. Only let us note there is a change in the language. It is not now the propitiatory view of the death of Christ, as in chapter iii. 22–26. There, that death has first glorified God. The blood before Him, His righteousness is maintained, established on His throne, the mercy-seat; and thus mercy toward all without infringing on the righteousness of God. But here (chap. iv. 24, 25) Christ is the Substitute of His people, answering to the second goat of atonement. The sins of Israel were transferred to that goat—laid on it and borne away. Just so here. "Who was delivered for our offences." Was He delivered for the sins of the whole world as their Substitute, to bear them away? Then clearly they would have been borne away; for God has accepted the Substitute. This is certain, for He has raised Him from the dead. This would teach the fatal error of universal

redemption. Hence the need of carefully noting that these words are distinctly limited to believers. "If we believe" or "believing." Abraham believed God, and that was reckoned *to him* as righteousness. We believe God that "He hath raised up Jesus OUR Lord from the dead; who was delivered for OUR offences, and was raised again for OUR justification." The next chapter will also shew that this must be limited to believers. "Therefore being justified by faith, WE have peace with God through OUR Lord Jesus Christ." To apply these words then to all, is to destroy their effect to all, or to teach, what is false on the face of it, that all will be saved.

Let us, then, take the facts in their order. God is speaking to us here. Do we believe Him, that He hath raised up Jesus from among the dead? That alone would not be enough, the devils know that that is so, and many an unconverted man does not doubt that. But mark the next fact: "who was delivered for our offences." Had it said, "our transgressions," it would not have taken in Gentiles, who were not under law; but this is a word that takes in all our sins—under law as transgressions, or sinners without law. Now, do you really believe that Jesus was delivered up to the cruel hands of men, yea, nailed to the cross, and there to bear, and did bear, the wrath of God due to *your very sins?* Before you read another line, we entreat you to answer that question in the

presence of God. Can you look back, and see the Holy One of God bearing your sins, as truly as if there was not another whose sins He bore on the cross? Oh, what a sight, and your Substitute!

And, if we may use the word, not only did His death make the infinite payment that infinite justice demanded, but He "was raised again for *our* justification." Thus God has shewn His acceptance of the ransom—the death of *our* Substitute; but He could in no way more distinctly have shewn our everlasting discharge, than by raising up the Substitute for our justification. Oh, how wondrous! He was raised up from among the dead, that, believing God, we might justly be reckoned, accounted, righteous before God; our sins as truly borne away, never to be reckoned to us, as though we had never sinned—justified, reckoned righteous before and by God our Father. Thus we have more than promise—all is accomplished fact. All *our* sins—for they were all alike future then—have been borne by Jesus. "Who was delivered for our offences." God has raised Him again for our justification. Believing God, we are justified, reckoned righteous. Mark, "raised again *for* our justification" cannot possibly mean because we were justified; this thought entirely sets aside faith. It is evidently "for," in the sense of, for the purpose of our justification; that is, when, through grace, we believe. "Therefore, being justified *by faith*"—being reckoned

righteous on the principle of faith—" we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Chap. v. 1.) Many souls are perplexed as to whether they have the right faith—" justified by faith." If we separate this verse from the end of the previous chapter, we get occupied with faith as an abstract matter; and indeed we make faith that which, somehow, merits justification, and very soon it becomes a question of examining our own feelings. It may be said, But did not " many believe in his name when they saw the miracles which he did; but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men"? (John ii. 23.) Just so; but what did they believe? No doubt they believed in Him as the Messiah, when they saw the miracles that He did. But that was quite a different matter from what we have before us here. " Well," you say, " I am sure I long to have peace with God, but I am not sure I have got it. How is this? *You* say, Partly because I ask myself, Have I the right faith? but the fact is, my horrid sins and iniquities rise up before me, and press me, until I am almost ready to conclude I have no part in Christ. Conscience also says it is all true."

Was not Jesus, the Holy, Holy One, delivered for those very iniquities? Do you believe God has raised Him from the dead—He " who was delivered for our offences"? This is a very different affair from miracles, important as they are in their

place. Mark, this is real substitution—Christ, the delivered Substitute of His people, of the believer. We must not confound this with the propitiation, which was not only for us, but for the whole world. God is glorified about sin, so that free pardon is preached to every creature—to all men.

Let us take a picture, or type, of this; indeed this scripture seems to refer to it. After the blood of one goat had been sprinkled on the golden mercy-seat before God, shewing the righteousness of God met by the blood of Jesus, before the eye of God—then "he shall bring the live goat; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away, by the hand of a fit man, into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited." (Lev. xvi. 21.) Now compare this with another scripture: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . . And he bare the sin of many." (Isa. liii. 5–12.) The scriptures do not teach that He bare the sins of all; but, as the Substitute, the sins of many; and

this in contrast with the doom of those who reject Him, and must therefore be judged. Yes, mark the contrast. "And AS it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of *many;* and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 27, 28.)

Now faith is not believing that I feel, or that I do believe. But do you believe this amazing fact, that God hath raised Him from the dead who has been thus, as your Substitute, delivered for your offences? This is the first question as to all your iniquities. Were they transferred to Christ, laid on Him? Not the sins of one year, like Israel on the day of atonement, but all your sins and iniquities before you were born. Did He take the whole responsibility of them, according to the righteous claims of God? Did He come, and was He delivered for this very purpose? Was it bearing the wrath of God against your sins, that made Him cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Oh, love beyond all words or thought! Did He fail? Nay; hear His words: "It is finished." Yes, that work He came to do is finished. God is glorified. Our iniquities have been laid on Him, transferred to Him, borne by Him; not some of our sins, but all our iniquities, were laid on Him. The Lord Jehovah laid them on Him. And it is finished. Oh, my soul, ponder this well—"It is finished!" He hath made thy

peace with God by His own blood. And now what does He say to thee? "Peace unto you." Dost thou say, But, oh, my horrid sins! He replies, They were all laid on me; "peace to thee." He shews His hands and His side. But I have denied Thee, Lord, when I ought to have confessed Thee. "Peace unto you."

Now God, having judged our sins, all our iniquities, on His Son, can He again in righteousness judge them on us? Do you say, "I do not for a moment doubt Jesus died on the cross as my Substitute, and bore my sins in His own body on the tree; still, I have not the blessed certainty that I am justified, and have peace with God; I do not experience that happiness I ought." Does this scripture, or any other, say we are either justified, or have peace, by experience? Does it say that we are to look at our feelings for evidence that we are justified? God has done a certain thing, to give to faith the certainty of our justification, and that one thing, which He has done for this very purpose, has been greatly overlooked. Jesus not only was delivered for our offences, but we read, "and was raised again for our justification." Yes, God raised Him from among the dead, not *because* we were justified, but for the express purpose that, believing Him, we might be justified. Thus, if Christ be not raised, we are deceived, and yet in our sins. (1 Cor. xv. 17.) But He is raised; the whole question is settled to faith.

Do you say, "But must not I accept the atonement of my Substitute?" Nay, in this case it is God that has shewn to us that He has accepted the one sacrifice for our sins, by raising Jesus from the dead, and giving Him a place above all heavens. And now, as to your sins, fellow-believer—where are they? They have been transferred to your Substitute. Well, they could not be on you, and on Him. No. Where are they then? Are they on Christ? No. But they must be on Him, if on any one, as He has taken the whole responsibility of them before His God. They are not on Him. Then they cannot be on you. Oh, wondrous grace! God says He will remember them no more. If He did, He must remember them as against Christ, and this is impossible. Christ is in the unclouded presence of God in light. Then so are you justified from all things—not hoping to be so. Could anything be more certain than this resting on the very words of God? Did not God give His beloved Son for this very purpose, that we might have unclouded peace with Him? Why should we doubt Him?

CHAPTER V.

CONNECTING, then, this verse—indeed the first eleven verses—with the last verse in chapter iv., we have three things made sure to us. Being justified, accounted righteous, before God, we have, as to all our sins, peace with God, yet fully recognising His holiness and righteousness; and this, not through anything we have done, but through our Lord Jesus Christ; peace resulting from the blessed knowledge by faith that all our sins have been put away by the blood of Jesus, so that God can have no charge of guilt against us. *We have* peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. As to the past, all is cleared away.

Then, in the second place: "By whom also we have access by faith into THIS grace wherein we stand." We enter by faith into the full, unclouded favour of God. This grace implies the free favour revealed in the redemption we have, being justified freely. This is our happy, abiding place. There we stand. What a wondrous, present peace! We need not say this cannot be enjoyed if we are walking carelessly, or allowing sin in any way.

And in the third place, as to the future, we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." We do not

hope to be justified, or to have peace—these *we have*—but we hope, with rejoicing, for the glory of God. Is it not joy to our hearts to know that we shall soon be in the scene where all is to the glory of God, all suited to Him; all pure within and without? Yes, sinless purity suited to Him, when He who has redeemed us has come, and taken us to Himself. Can anything give our hearts such joy as this, to be with Him, and like Him?

Verses 3–5. "And not only so," not only have we peace with God, present access into the free favour of God, and the longing hope for His glory, but this enables us to glory in present tribulations also. "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; BECAUSE THE LOVE OF GOD IS shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US."

We must notice a very common mistake as to these verses. They are often read as meaning the exact opposite of what they say, as though we must have this experience in order that the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts; and if we pray much, and are very diligent in patience, experience, and hope, that then we may hope that the Holy Spirit will be given us. No words can tell how utterly wrong all this is. The Holy Ghost is given to us because Jesus has finished the work of redemption; and He being now glori-

fied, we are sealed by the Spirit, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Thus, to suppose that the Holy Ghost will be given because of any efforts, or experience, or devotedness of our own, is to set aside the perfect work of Christ. No, it is the very opposite; all this blessed patient experience is because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

Now just suppose you are invited to dine with her Majesty the Queen, and she shews you every possible attention and kindness; and, instead of enjoying that kindness, you propose to those present that you shall pray earnestly that you may have a queen, and a queen that will shew you kindness; what would she—what would any one—think of such conduct? Blind and deaf persons alone could make such a mistake. No doubt those who know such a Queen best are most loyal; and those who know that the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them, will love Him most, and have this blessed experience because of the very fact.

What shall we say of the blind and deaf who see nothing of God's love to us, or its being shed abroad in our hearts; but, turning this precious scripture into legality, think and say that God will love us only as long as we love Him? The more we love God, the more He will love us! This thought is at the root of a great amount of

spurious effort of holiness in man. Many would be startled to see it in plain dress. What would you say to striving to make the flesh holy, in order that God might love it? Are not thousands doing so? Is not this the very thing you have been doing? Have we not practically said the old "I" must be holy, in order that God may love me? Truly the flesh must be subdued, but not even that, that God may love me, but because He has. We will now consider how He has loved us, and in what state we were when He loved us.

Verses 6–11. "For WHEN we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Have our hearts been bowed down to this fact? Not only were we guilty, but we had no strength, were without strength to be better. Whilst we were in that very state, infinite love to us was displayed, "in due time Christ died for the ungodly." There was no other means possible for God to justify the ungodly, but by His Son dying for the ungodly. Yea, it is in this very thing the love of God shines out to us. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Was this on the principle, that the more we love God, the more He will love us? Can there be a greater display of His love than, "Christ died for us"? Impossible! But this was while we were yet sinners.

Oh, pause and dwell on the love of God to us. Yes, not our love of God first. Not that we loved

God, but that He thus loved us. The more this takes possession of our souls, the more shall we love Him.

Do you say, All this may be quite true as to the past; but may we not fail in the future, and then will not God cease to love us? Nay, having known the love of God, may we not at last be left to everlasting wrath? Let us hear the answer of the Holy Ghost to this most solemn question. If God has thus commended His love to us that when we were sinners, Christ died for us, "much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Mark, *being* justified by His blood is always immutably the same; it is not having been justified once by His blood, we need to be again, but, being justified, it ever stands. His blood is ever the same before God, having atoned for all our sins. Therefore we are ever justified by His blood. There is no change. Then, not only we are, but "WE SHALL be, saved from wrath through him." Oh, precious, infinite grace!

And there is still more: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, MUCH MORE, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Oh, what pains our Father takes to convince us of His everlasting, unchanging love! Just think—the whole atoning work of reconciling us to God was done by the death of His Son. God was glorified; our sins, all our

sins, were transferred to Christ, and borne by Him, when we were enemies! And now we are justified from all things, redeemed to God, made His children. He who reconciled us by His death lives to serve, to wash our feet, to save to the end, by His priesthood and advocacy, should we fail. "MUCH MORE, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Now this certainty as to the future removes every hindrance to the heart's full joy in God. Not only have we this certainty of being saved to the end by His life, "but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation."

This ends the whole question as to our sins. God is absolutely righteous in the way in which He has put them away by the death of His Son. They have been laid on the atoning Substitute, in infinite love to us, when we were enemies, without strength. He who once bare them in His own body is raised from the dead for our justification. We are justified, and we have peace with God. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. The love of God and the righteousness of God are fully revealed and displayed in reconciling us to Himself by the death of His Son. Our future practical deliverance and salvation from wrath are absolutely certain. We have received in our souls the full effect of all this as to our sins. And, oh, wondrous privilege! as to all our sins, we have now

unhindered joy in God! Salvation is entirely of God, and we know Him, so as to have joy in God, according to all that He is. We need not say this could not be through the law. If even the law could have justified from past sins—which was impossible—who could stand on his own responsibility as to the future, and joy in God? No, it is all through our Lord Jesus Christ, from first to last. Let us beware of letting slip this perfect grace, of letting in the least bit of confidence in the flesh. It is Christ in the future, as Christ in the past.

This verse 11, then, closes the question of sins. The question of sin will come before us presently, if the Lord will. May the Holy Ghost deepen in all our souls a sense of the infinite grace of our God, so that we may continually joy in Him.

Verse 12. We now come to the question of sin, or the two heads of the two families: the one head, Adam, by whom sin entered into the world; the other head, Christ, by whom grace has abounded over sin.

Many souls are greatly perplexed who find, though they believe their sins are forgiven, yet they find the root, sin, in the flesh. Much of this confusion arises from want of carefully noticing the distinction between sins and sin, as in this epistle. As we have seen, verse 11 closes the question of sins. Verse 12 takes up sin. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world,

and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Thus there are two proofs of the origin of evil: sin entered into the world by one man. Of the whole race of mankind, all sin, and all die. What absolute consistency in the word of God, and with facts! And this has been found to be the case, whether man was placed under law, or without law. After sin had come in, and man fell, the law was not given for two thousand five hundred years. "For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed [or, put to account] when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." (Vers. 13, 14.) That is, they had not transgressed a given law; yet there was death, the proof that sin was there. Sin and death then came into the world by its head, Adam. Death, then, is not merely the penalty of a broken law; but sin having once come in, death is its result; or, as expressed in the word, "The wages of sin is death." Now, in contrast with what came in by the creature's sin, the first head—sin and death—God is pleased to reveal to us what has come in for a new race by the gift of His own Son—righteousness and life. Only the infinite gift *must* abound over the finite, dreadful as has been the result of that creature's sin. God could not, in His free favour to us, give a gift that would

come short of our need. Hence, the care of the Holy Ghost to shew us how that gift of free favour has abounded over the sin, the root of evil, and death, that came in by Adam. "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift [the act of favour]. For if through the offence of one many be dead, MUCH MORE the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man—Jesus Christ—hath abounded unto many." (Ver. 15.) No doubt the effect of the offence of Adam's sin on the many, even all his posterity, is great and terrible; and we all belonged to that "many." Death passed upon all men. Yet if we have passed from death unto life in the risen Head of the new creation, we have now to see how the grace of God, and the gift, by grace, by One—Jesus Christ—hath abounded unto the many in Him.

Verse 16. "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification." In Adam we see one sin, and the consequences that have flowed from it in judgment. Now look at the free gift. See Jesus, our Substitute: all our iniquities have been made to meet on Him, and this for the very purpose, that we might by faith be justified from them all. And, much more than this, not only justified from all our iniquities by His blood, but He, having died for our offences, was raised again for our justification.

Let us dwell now on this great fact—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead—and this for the express purpose of our justification—of our complete, abounding justification. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He took to Himself that holy life He had, and was. He could assume it in perfect righteousness, having glorified God; and having redeemed "the many," according to that glory, He could now communicate to them, *to us*, that same and eternal life, a justified life, in righteousness, unchanging, ever-subsisting. It will be very blessed if our souls understand this reigning, subsisting justification OF LIFE, though fully admitting that our life, as children of Adam, was forfeited.

Verse 17. "For if by one offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one—Jesus Christ." This is the close of the parenthesis from verse 13. Can any one deny that death reigns over Adam's race through sin? Where is the physician that can stay the reign of death? And Jesus says of His many, "and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Death has positively no claim on those who receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness. They REIGN in life by One—Jesus Christ. Nothing can stay its course; none can pluck them out of His hand.

Verse 18. "Therefore, as by the offence of one [or, one offence], judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one [or, by one act of righteousness], the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The true sense of this verse is, as by one offence judgment *toward* all men; so, by one act of righteousness, the free gift *toward* all unto justification of life. That is, as in verse 19, the effect of the two acts—Adam's sin, and Christ's obedience unto death on the two "manys"—the two families. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." It is, however, of the utmost importance to see that this justification OF LIFE is connected with, and results from, His resurrection from the dead. It is not written that He kept the law for our justification, but that God raised Him from the dead for that very purpose—for our justification. It is not, and could not be, our life in the flesh under the law that is justified; that could not be in any way. It is judged, and set aside. The life that we have now before God is the life of one that has passed through death for us; and everything that the righteous claims of God had against us is fully met by that one death of our Substitute. Christ is our life. Can there be a charge against Him, even as our Substitute? We have, then, through the abounding of grace, a life against which

there is, and can be, no charge—therefore a justified life.

If in Adam, or in the flesh, under law, nothing can justify us, or that sinful life. Death and judgment are written upon it. If in Christ, we have a life that reigns, a life completely justified, that nothing can condemn. As to our sins, we are accounted righteous — faith is reckoned as righteousness, and, being justified, we have peace with God. As to our sinful Adam nature, life, and standing, we are no longer in it, but in Christ raised from the dead; and the eternal life we have in Him is justified life—in Him, how completely justified! It is of the utmost importance to lay fast hold of this; completely justified from our sins by Him; and, as in the new creation, completely justified in Him raised from the dead. In both cases it is wholly of God, both by and in Christ Jesus.

Dear young believer, do you know that you are no longer in Adam, or connected with the old things that belong to him? The great point for you to see is this: "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new; and all things are of God." (2 Cor. v. 17.) What a sad mistake would you make to go back, or cling to, the old things—law and a sinful nature—and suppose that anything would improve the one, or justify you under the other, now passed away! And now

mark, your righteousness and life is to you all new, and all of God. What is of God must be perfect. Thus we are perfectly and for ever justified in the risen Christ.

Verses 20, 21. Oh, marvellous free favour of God! Do you ask, Why was the law given, if man cannot be justified by it, or if it cannot give a justified life? "The law entered that the offence might abound." It may even have been so in your past experience. It may have entered with killing power, and the more you have struggled to keep it, the more the offence has abounded. How you may have struggled to make the flesh holy and the more you have struggled, the more you have failed. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Do you believe God as to this? Can you now cease from works, and rest in the boundless, free favour of God? "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign"—yes, and that "through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." It is not grace alone that reigneth—*that* would be indifference to sin; neither righteousness alone, or the sinner must be condemned; but grace, through righteousness. Yes, it REIGNS on, on, unto eternal life.

But if we are constituted righteous by and in Christ, entirely apart from any works of our own, sins being forgiven, and sin not reckoned to us—a question is then raised as to practical righteous-

ness—Shall we continue in the practice of sin? The enemies of the grace of God always raise this question, or put it as a charge, that those who hold the doctrines of the sovereign grace of God, imply that they live in sin that grace may abound. The charge is as common in this day, as it was by the Pharisees in that day, against the apostle. In the next chapter we have his inspired answer to the usual calumny. But rest assured, nothing short of this abounding grace can give rest to the soul.

CHAPTER VI.

This, then, is the question, if grace has abounded over sins and sin—over all our iniquities which we have committed, and over the sin we have inherited, and where sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded—is it true, then, that abounding grace leads to continuance in the practice of sin? From that day to this, the rejecters of the gospel have always said it is so. If you are completely justified, not by your own works, but in and by the subsisting, unchanging righteousness of God in Jesus Christ our Lord raised from the dead—then that implies you hold that you may be careless, and indeed may practise sin!

Now what says the Holy Ghost by the apostle as to this? "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Far be the thought; "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Here, then, is that principle of deliverance from sin so greatly ridiculed—deliverance from sin by death. Neither shall we find any other deliverance from sin in the word of God. For centuries, many sincere souls sought deliverance by fastings, and seclusion in monasteries. Many sincere souls now seek it by

efforts after a false perfection of the flesh. But here is the full truth of God—deliverance from sin by death.

Only mark, it is not the future death of our bodies, should we die, but this—"How shall we THAT ARE DEAD to sin live any longer therein?" What does this mean, "we that are dead to sin"? Do you say, "It may mean those who have attained to perfection?" Is there such a thought? Nay, in order to shew how assuredly this applies to all Christians, the apostle says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Ver. 3.) So that he is careful to shew that this principle of deliverance from sin by death applies to all who have been truly baptised unto the death of Christ. Nothing could be more plain, and yet nothing is less known. It ought surely to be well understood, for the apostle says, "Know ye not?"

Do you understand, reader, this great practical truth of deliverance from sin? Do you say, as an authorised teacher said to us a few days ago? "We are all sinners, and unfit for heaven; we must seek in every way to improve our sinful nature; but I fear it will never, in this world, be quite fit for heaven." Fit for heaven! Is a corpse

fit for heaven? It is dead, it is too loathsome for heaven or earth. It must be buried. Do you bury it, to make it suddenly, or gradually, perfect? It is a mass of corruption; there is no life in it, not a particle, nor can there be, until the putting forth of the power of God in resurrection.

Is it not so as to our whole moral being? Our neighbour, sincere as he is, is spending his life in seeking to improve himself—the flesh, by sacraments and ritual, he fears he will never be able to do it so as to be fit for heaven. How blind to that which even his baptism should teach him. The fact is, we do not believe God, that we are as bad as He says we are; so bad, so vile, so loathsome, so offensive, so dead to all that is good, in the flesh as children of Adam. Have you ever said, "I am only fit to be buried out of sight. Yes, bury me, bury *me* out of sight. I am not fit for heaven, I am not fit for earth. Oh, bury me out of the sight of God, and out of my own sight"? Here is water, said the eunuch, what doth hinder?

Mark well, then, the deliverance from sin is not the improvement of self, or an evil nature—the flesh, but "we ARE buried with him by baptism into death." We are not baptised unto the work of the Spirit in us, but unto His death, who died for us, and rose again. The *death*, then, that delivers from sin is not a death unto sin we attain to, but the death of Christ on the cross, and our

identification with it—"buried with him." And you will notice, there is no thought of baptism communicating life. Baptism is unto death, and life in the risen Christ is beyond it. For Christ not only died, was actually dead, but He is "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." How glorious the new creation! Christ, the beginning of that new creation, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. "Even so we should walk in newness of life." Not only old things are passed away, and all become new, but we are in that new creation by the glory of the Father. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." The resurrection side of this subject is brought out more fully in Colossians ii., only here let us note, that baptism unto His death is the chief point to shew what all Christians should know—the truth of deliverance by death.

Verse 6. "Knowing this, that our old man is [or, has been] crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [annulled], that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [or, justified] from sin." Now the question is this: Is the old man crucified when the believer attains to perfection, as it is called—that then the old nature ceases to exist, or is all turned good? There is no thought in this text of its being a state peculiar to some Christians, and not the state of others. It is the very truth of our

christian position. Knowing this that our old man has been crucified. WHEN? In our experience? That is not the thought here, but, "has been crucified with him." Surely that was on the cross. Not only He, in infinite love, bare our sins on the cross, but our old man was fully judged there too. It is indeed made good to our souls' experience when we become identified with this crucified Jesus, of which baptism is a figure. Are we thus *identified* with the death of Jesus? Not the improvement or restoration of our old nature, but can we look back to the cross, and say There I was crucified with Christ? All that of which I might boast had to be crucified. Most assuredly this was so, that the body of sin might be annulled, made powerless; for a dead man is powerless, or he would not be dead.

We have seen how God justifies His people from their sins by the blood of Jesus. Now we see how He justifies them from sin, the root, or nature. "For he that is dead is justified from sin" (margin). Sins are forgiven, and now sin cannot be imputed to him that is dead, he is justified from sin.

But there would be no power for a holy life in merely being dead to sin. What true power is we shall find when we reach Romans viii. 2; only we must carefully notice, that we are as truly identified with Christ risen, or more so, than we were identified with Him in death.

Verses 8–10. "Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." The one follows the other. And this for ever. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." He has nothing more to say to sin, or sin to Him; He was here once, and bore its utmost curse; He was made sin, or a sin-offering. What sin? His own? He had none. Sin, our sin, has nothing more to say to Him, or He to it. It is all gone from the sight of God. He who was once under it, even unto death, now liveth to God. Oh, precious, soul-sustaining truth! And sin can have no more to say to Him, and no more to say to us. Once identified with Him in death —yea, more than identified, alive in Him for evermore. Oh, my soul, dost not thou believe God?

Verse 11. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God *in* Jesus Christ our Lord." Is it, then, that the old nature, or sin, is eradicated, dead? Does it no longer exist in the believer? There is no such thought here. If it were really so, really dead, we should have no need to reckon it so. Did you ever hear that a corpse was reckoned dead? We are so identified with Christ, that God wishes us to reckon ourselves dead with Him, and alive in

Him. He wishes us to treat the old nature as if it were dead unto sin, and we alive in Christ risen from the dead; only, as we said, the latter ever goes beyond the former. For if any man be *in* Christ, he is a new creature (the word "through," in this verse 11, should be "in"). We have peace with God, as to our sins, through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. But God, who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ, has also raised us up IN Him; so that we are alive unto God IN Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, nothing suits Satan's purpose more than to set all this aside; both the finished work of Christ, by which we are justified from our sins—our identification with His death unto sin, and also the work of God, in raising us up IN Christ, and thus delivering us from sin, alive unto God. Yes, instead of the plain truth of this scripture, deliverance from sin has been held out as a future attainment of the believer, attained only by some. This is the root of self-righteous perfection in the flesh.

Just what God says to us in these verses gives the only principle of deliverance from sin. All other methods are mere deception. But you say, "I find my old nature is not dead as to fact." Just so; but you are to reckon yourself dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Much that follows we shall find to be the unfolding of this all-important principle. It will affect every step of our walk in this world. How

ought we to walk to shew our identification with a crucified Christ? Yes, we are crucified with Him. You may know many who walk as if they were dead to the things of God and His Christ, and fully alive to the world that crucified Jesus. May God use these solemn truths in sanctifying power to our souls!

Verse 12. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

Far be the thought that ye should practise sin, that grace may abound. To live in sin is the very opposite of death to sin, as seen above; dead with Christ, as professed in baptism, is surely not to live in sin. And now, also, alive to God *in* Jesus Christ our Lord. "Let not, therefore, sin reign in your mortal body." He does not say sin no longer exists. He does not say you are to reckon it extirpated. If an enemy no longer existed in a country, there would be no need to say, Do not let that enemy reign.

Neither could you say, "that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof," if there were no sinful lusts to subdue and to resist. But we are not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, "but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead," &c. Yes, the very principle of a holy walk is our death with Christ, and our being alive unto God. It is not for a moment to attain unto this state; but, reckoning ourselves

thus dead, and alive again, we are so to walk. Conflict is clearly recognised, but there is DELIVERANCE.

Verse 14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace."

Thus, having life in Christ, we can now look at sin, at our old sinful self, as an enemy, but an enemy that shall not have dominion. What a deliverance this is! To one that knows the utter vileness of the old nature, no words can sufficiently express the greatness of deliverance from the reign of sin. There may be sudden temptation—yea, failure—but sin shall not have dominion—it shall not reign. But why shall not sin reign? "For ye are not under the law, but under grace." The whole history of Christendom, and the history of every individual believer, proves the truth of this statement, and also its opposite. Just in proportion as the free favour of God, through Christ Jesus, is known and enjoyed, is the deliverance from the slavery of sin, and we can live a holy life. The law can give no power to those under it, but can only curse them.

The moment you make the favour of God to be conditional, whether it be concerning the law of Moses, or the precepts of the gospel, you begin at the wrong end, and will soon find nothing but misery and doubt. You will say, I do not keep the commands of God as I ought; or, I do not

love Christ as I ought; am I a Christian at all? Now, is all that law, or grace? Clearly it is law. And the word says, sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under that principle, but under grace. There surely can be no holiness of life, unless the heart be perfectly free, in the unbounded, free, unconditional favour of God. Has He taken me up, an ungodly sinner, who deserved hell? Has He, in pure, unmerited love, given His Son to die for our sins? Has He raised Him from the dead for our justification? Has He given us eternal redemption through His blood? Have we thus peace with God, according to all that God is? Are we identified with Christ in all the merit of His death; and more, alive in Him to God? And all this absolute, free grace, the grace of Him who changes not? And now I am alive to God, I can reckon myself, my old man, dead. And thus I am delivered from myself, to live to God. And all unchanging grace to me, then I am not on the ground of law, or conditions for life, or salvation, or deliverance, but absolutely under grace, free and eternal. Oh, now I am free to serve the Lord, in real separation from, and abhorrence of, evil. Oh, glorious truth! sin shall not have dominion.

No doubt, dear young believer, many will tell you that such doctrine as that will lead you to sin as your old nature likes. "What, then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under

grace? God forbid," or, far be the thought. They who talk so have never known what the grace of God is, or what true liberty is—not liberty to sin, but liberty from sin. Mark, these words are not to such as are trying to experience that they *are* dead to sin, or dead with Christ, and alive to God. They have made the profession in baptism that they *are* dead and buried with Christ, identified with Him in death. They reckon themselves dead unto sin, and thus are justified from sin, and alive to God. Oh, wondrous, almost forgotten, truth! Death to sin—the only deliverance from sin. But what deliverance would there be without life in Christ to God? How can you walk in newness of life, if you have not got newness of life? If your old nature were placed under law, then, surely, sin would have dominion. But because God has given you a new life—and that His free gift—and now placed you in His own unchanging, boundless grace, "What, then, shall we sin [that is, practise sin] because we are not under law, but under grace?" Far be the thought.

We are quite sure all who would put you under law, have never yet truly known what the grace of God is. And do not forget that all this shews the connection there is between grace and practical holiness, or righteousness of walk. This is clear in the next verse.

Verse 16. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye

are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

Once we were the slaves of sin —"without strength." Sin, as a slave-owner, was complete master. We have been redeemed freely from that condition, and delivered, by the death of Jesus, from that old master. It was then sin unto death. Which master do we obey, sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness? Are we alive to God, that we should obey the old slave-master, sin? Is *that* the purpose of the grace of God? Far from it. Now, can you apply verse 17 to yourself? Can you, with thankfulness, own the full truth, "that ye were the slaves of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you?" Now, do not shirk this point.

A slave is compelled to do what his owner bids him. He has no power to resist him, though he may hate the thing, he cannot refuse to do it. Have you known this awful slavery of sin? Had sin the mastery? Did you do the things you hated, and had you no power to escape that cruel master? God be thanked, we can own it was so; and, God be thanked, He met us there. And what is that form of doctrine to which we were delivered? Was it not death with Jesus, as our baptism typified? Have you obeyed it? Identification with Christ in death, and in Him alive from the dead. Then the answer is this:

Verse 18. "Being, then, made free from sin, ye became the servants [or, slaves] of righteousness."

Yes, this is how you changed masters, through death, from sin to righteousness; and all this in perfect grace. Whilst under sin, free from righteousness; now servants of righteousness, and free from the slavery of sin. Yes, sin and righteousness are looked at as two masters. The Christian is perfectly free from the old tyrant. "So now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness."

It is quite true man used the very law which God gave to prove his guilt, to set up his own self-righteousness. And others may abuse the grace of God as license to sin. Yet it is most clear, that the object the Holy Ghost has in unfolding these truths of infinite grace, is, that we may, as alive to God, yield our members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

Verse 20. "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are ashamed? For the end of those things is death."

Yes, that was our condition—slaves of sin. And, oh, how deep the shame upon us in all the terrible fruits of that slavery. But what a change!

Verse 22. "But now, being made free from sin [that is, from the slavery, not from conflict], and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

We must carefully note, there is no thought here, either of improvement of the sinful nature, or of perfection of that nature. No, death is not improvement. But the greatest of all mistakes about this chapter, is, to suppose that freedom from sin is a matter of attainment. It is by death —the death of Christ—and that is not our attainment. And reckoning ourselves dead with Him is not attainment. It is not then by serving God that we become free from sin; that would be human merit. Is it not the exact opposite? Read the words carefully: "But now, being made free from sin, and become the servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness," &c.

Thus every Christian is made free from sin, and, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Ver. 18.) It does not say, Ye became the servants of righteousness, and then ye were made free from sin. There can be no true fruit unto holiness until we are made free from sin. These great truths will occupy us, if the Lord will, in chapter vii. In the meantime these are true, solemn facts!

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, IN Jesus Christ our Lord." What a gift! Oh, how few believe this! We have no hand in meriting this, or it would not be the gift of God.

CHAPTER VII.

We have now in detail that from which we have been delivered in chapter vi. And it is impossible to understand this chapter unless we see this order. The truth of chapter vi. must have its full place before we attempt to understand chapter vii. The apostle had said, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." This is a very important statement, and the apostle now explains how we have (that is, those who were under it) been delivered. He then describes the condition of a quickened soul under law before deliverance. This he does very fully, and finally takes up with joy the theme of deliverance, thus leading on to chapter viii.

First, then, how were those under law delivered from it? "Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" This fact shews the importance of the truth already brought out—identification with the death of Christ; reckoning ourselves dead with Him, and alive to God. For if those once alive under it were still alive under it, they must be responsible to fulfil its every jot and tittle, or it must curse them. Thus Christianity in that case would be valueless. Man would be still under the curse. The law hath

dominion over a man as long as he liveth. His responsibility to law only ends in death. The law as to marriage proves this: death alone dissolves the tie of responsibility. Whilst one husband lives the wife cannot be married to another. She would be an adulteress. This was self-evident to all who knew the law.

In like manner the believer cannot, so to speak, have two husbands. He cannot be alive in the flesh, married to the law (under law), and also be married to Christ. No doubt men say this must be so, that you must have both the law and Christ; but we are not explaining what men say, but scripture. God tells us we cannot have Christ and law. And as a wife is only delivered from the old husband by death, so we can only be delivered from the old husband, the principle of law, by death. Now whilst it is true we have not actually died, yet mark the importance of the truth we have learnt in chapter vi. to reckon ourselves dead, identified with Christ in death. Only now this is seen in its special bearing on law in the first place.

Verse 4. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Thus they were as dead to the law by the body of Christ as though they had actually died. They pass from under its dominion

into another entirely new state. They have no more to say to the old husband; but enter into a new relationship, married to a new husband, to one raised up from among the dead, even Christ.

But would not great teachers tell you this is antinomianism, to be dead to the law, to have no more to say to it, or it to you? this would lead to bring forth fruit unto sin. It would be dreadful, say they. But what does God say as to this? He says all this is "that we should bring forth fruit unto God." This is perfectly in keeping with what has gone before. "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." To be under the law, is to be under its curse, for all are proved guilty. (Chap. iii.) But now we are one with the risen Christ, all sins forgiven, sin judged, that we may bring forth fruit unto God.

Verse 5. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." This verse determines the character of the teaching that follows. You cannot say, When we were in the flesh, unless you have been delivered from that state. You could not say, When we were in London unless you have left it. It is very important to understand this. It is often asked, Is this part of chapter vii. the proper experience of a Christian? Certainly not, or it would not have said, When we

were in the flesh. Yet it is, as we shall soon see, the experience through which most, if not all, Christians have passed. Then again, it is said to be the experience of the unconverted. Neither can this be; for they do not delight in the law of God after the inward man. (Ver. 22.) It is evidently the experience of a quickened soul, born of God, having a new nature that delights in the law of God after the inward man; but one who is still under law, and has not yet learned what deliverance by death is.

It would be true to say, the experience described from verse 5 to 24 is the wretched experience of every person born of God, if put under law. And when we remember how many Christians are in that very condition, there is no wonder that so many are thus miserable. We must understand then the words, "For when we were in the flesh," to mean whilst we were under the first husband, the law. The law can only have to say to man as alive. It so regarded man, and commanded and required obedience, as regarding the one under it alive in the flesh. Once dead, all commands and requirements cease. You cannot tell a dead man either to love God or his neighbour; but being alive in a nature which can only sin, the command can only bring out transgression. The law might require righteousness; but as man was not righteous but guilty, it became thus a ministration of judgment and death. The christian

position however is this, to reckon himself dead as to the flesh, and alive to God. A wholly new life to God. The whole subject will be greatly simplified if we keep these two things distinct: the old life or old nature, called the flesh—the ground on which man was tested under law; and the new life, or the new nature, which the believer has, even the very eternal life of the risen Christ. We have seen how we have been delivered from the slavery of sin by being dead to the one and alive in the other. It is not that sin is eradicated, but we are dead to it.

Verse 6. Now it is this same principle of death, and resurrection-life in Christ, applied to the question of law. It is not that the law is dead, or abolished in itself, but we are dead to it: "But now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

The law did produce all this truly miserable experience, but now we are delivered from the law. Can you truthfully say so? It is most important to have this question settled before we examine that wretchedness from which we have been delivered. By the death and resurrection of Christ we are not only fully justified from our sins, but we have passed from one condition of sin and death, into an entirely new condition; yea, new creation of life and righteousness. From what we

were to what Christ *is*. We stood with Adam in sin and death; we now stand united, one with Christ in resurrection, where He is and what He is. "As he is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) His very life is communicated to us. This is as real to faith now, as it will be shortly to sight. A new creation in Christ Jesus.

It must be seen that this is full, complete justification from sins and sin, and deliverance from all claims of law. Again we ask, Are you thus delivered? There must be this complete deliverance to serve in newness of life. Have you thus passed from the flesh—the Adam state, to Christ? Can you say, Yes, it is now all Christ? Do you say, The flesh is still there, and it is sin? That is true. And the law is still there. Quite true. And I have sinned. Yes, that also is true. But what did Christ die for? Was it not for both your sins and sin? And are you sinning now, or delivered from sin? We shall, however, see all this more fully brought out in chapter viii. We only press this point: it is a delivered soul that can understand the awful experience described in what follows. The unconverted or the deceived Pharisee knows nothing of this bitter experience. It is even when the new, holy nature has been implanted, and with it the deep soul-longing for true holiness; and then to find no power in the flesh to do that which we long to do. Yea, the law of sin and death is like a slave master, and there is

no power to escape. And the more we attempt to keep the law, addressed to men as alive in the flesh, the deeper the wretchedness of doing the very things the new and holy nature hates. Yes, that which would give no trouble to one unconverted, or rather to one not born of God, fills the quickened soul with intense misery.

Is this your state? If quickened and under law, we are sure it is in some degree. Oh, how much of the excitement and effort of this day is to drown and help you to forget this your misery. Well, do not despair; we believe every one born of God passes more or less through this; and often those who pass through the deepest are those chosen to glorify God the most. We do not question that both equally mistake the chapter, who make it the experience of an unconverted sinner, and on the other hand, the *proper* experience of a Christian. Let us then look at it carefully.

Verse 7. If left to ourselves, even when there is the new life, the new, holy nature implanted, we should naturally turn to the law, and place ourselves under it. This is always the case where the Holy Ghost is not known. And it is remarkable, in these verses, that the Holy Spirit is not once named. As we have said, there are few that do not now pass through this experience; and those who have got deliverance can look back, and see the great profit they derived from this exercise of heart.

The first thing, then, we learn is this—that the law is not sin; it is by it we learn what sin is. The law found the root. "For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." When the new nature was given, the spirituality of the law was felt. A man without the new nature would say, Lust is not sin, unless you commit the very sin in transgression. But when the law comes home into the conscience, it detects the lust, and I say, Why, that is sin. Yes, the very lust is sin; that is, the nature is sin.

Verse 8. And that nature, being sin, takes occasion by the commandment to work in me all manner of desire for that which is forbidden. "For, without the law, sin was dead." It was inactive. Forbid a child to go into the garden, at once he desires to go; and, if will be at work, he goes. Now, not only may the nature be inactive, but,

Verse 9, "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." You never met a person, before he was quickened, but that person thought he was alive, and could do, and live. Yes, he says, I thought I was alive without the law once. Ask a natural man, Are you saved? He will reply, I do not know; I hope so. I attend my place of worship, and I am doing the best I can, and I hope I shall be in heaven at last. Oh, yes, he

says, I am alive. There is not a thought in his soul that he is lost. Not a word does he confess of the least need of a Substitute on the cross. And if you will but ask, even professing Christians, you will get, where you least expect it, such an answer.

Now, the moment a soul is born of God, all this is changed. Why, he says, how is this—I have a nature that desires the very thing God forbids? He turns to the word of God's law, and he dies to all hope of being in the flesh what he thought he was. "And I died." Yes, now we have the hard death of the old "I." He longs for holiness, turns to the commandments ordained to life: those who do it shall live in it (see Ezek. xx. 11), but he finds it unto death. He finds sin has the mastery, and uses the very commandment to slay him. Do not forget that this is "when we were in the flesh." How the last hope of goodness in the flesh was driven out of us!

Verse 12. The law was of God; it was not bad, or sin; it was "holy, and just, and good." It was not death to me; but sin, that it might appear sin. Oh, to find that I—my nature—as a child of Adam, was only sin, and that by the commandment it might, and did, become exceeding sinful.

Verse 14. Deeper still. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." Yes, the law justly demands righteousness.

And what do I find in me? "I am carnal, sold under sin." Do you know this? Have you learnt it as a helpless slave of sin? That is all that the old "I," the flesh, is—to hate the thing I do; to find I have no power to do the thing I would; and all the while to own that the law is good, and only requires of me what is good.

Verse 17. "Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." This is a discovery. I learn that there is a nature, sin, whilst in me, yet I can look upon it as distinct from myself, the new "I." Well, I say, What, then, is there in that old nature, the old "I"? There is not a bit of good in me, that is, my flesh, or old nature.

Verse 18. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) there dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not."

This is very humbling, to find in myself, as a child of Adam, no power whatever to do good—yea, the very opposite. "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I." This is the true character of the old nature, even when the new nature desires to do good, and to be holy—yea, when the new nature is holy, as born of God. So that it is not the new nature, the new "I," that does evil, as the old nature is doing the very thing the new nature condemns.

Verse 20. "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it"—no longer what I am, as a new creature—"but sin that dwelleth in me." Then there are two principles, or natures, in the man born of God. The principle of the old depraved nature is called a law.

Verse 21. "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." This is the fixed principle of the old nature—"when I would do good, evil is present with me." Yes, you say, that is just what I have found, to my deep sorrow; indeed, it has made me almost conclude that I cannot have been born of God at all. Those who are not born of God never discover themselves to be half as bad as you find your old self to be. But do not the very next words prove that you are born of God—that is, that you have a new "I," or new nature?

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Surely this proves, beyond a doubt, that there are two natures; for how could the old nature, which is sin, delight in the law of God? But it is so. "For I delight in the law of God AFTER THE INWARD MAN." Well, you say, it seems like a contradiction. That is exactly what the two natures are to each other; yes, in direct contradiction to that inward man which delights in the law of God. It says:

Verse 23. "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind,

and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Thus, to deny the two natures in a man born again, is to deny the plain teaching of the word of God. Did not Jesus say, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit"? Thus it is a wholly new birth, new nature, new creation, that is of the Spirit, and is spirit. That which is born of a sinful flesh, or nature, *is*, remains what it is—flesh or sin. And here we learn, if under law—that is, if we are on the ground of the flesh, under law for its improvement, as thousands are—then we find, in the war of the two natures, that we are brought into "captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." It is a terrible fact, but the utter badness of our old nature must be learnt practically, if we do not believe what God says about it. But if all this be the case, a man born of God, under law, not knowing the distinction of the two natures, must be extremely wretched, if sincere, and earnestly longing for holiness and righteousness of life. That is just what we find.

Verse 24. "O wretched man that I am." And it is now no longer, Who shall help me to improve the flesh? but, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Yes, self, the old man, the body of this death, must be given up. We must have a Deliverer, and that Deliverer is Christ.

Verse 25. "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Few words, but, oh, what a glorious deliverance and victory! After arriving at the full discovery of my utter helplessness, and the unchangeable badness of the old nature, the eye is now lifted up to Christ, and the heart swells up in the full joy of thankfulness. This deliverance will be more fully explained in the next chapter.

There is one mistake often made here, against which we must most carefully guard. It is often said, or implied, that what we have seen as to the old nature, the flesh, the law of sin in the members, is all quite true of a believer before he gets deliverance; but after that, *it* is changed, or eradicated—at all events, greatly improved, suddenly or gradually sanctified, &c., and that there is no such evil nature left in the delivered, or sanctified, saints. Is this so, or is it not so? Let the very next words, *after* our deliverance and thanksgiving, determine this important question.

Verse 25. "So, then, with the mind [or, new man] I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh [the old nature], the law of sin." We are no longer on the ground of the flesh, as alive under law, seeking to improve the flesh — no longer in the flesh. But that the flesh remains in the delivered saint is stated in the strongest possible way—in the very person who, with the new mind, or nature, serves the law of God. But the flesh, and the law of sin, still remain in me. We

may cavil, and reason, and ridicule, but here is the truth of scripture, and what every believer finds to be true. So that we need preserving, spirit, soul, and body, blameless.

Place that old nature under law, try to find some good in it, and immediately our experience will be, as here described.

One question more, before we leave this subject. How is it that so many Christians are in this experience? Simply because, though born of God, they are, through false teaching, or defective teaching, placed under law, and have never known the true character of deliverance. Let us, then, in the next place, inquire what that deliverance is.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." What a wonderful statement! It is not a question merely of what will be the justification of the believer when manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, but "now" *there is nothing to condemn* to those who are in Christ Jesus. If I look at myself in the flesh, it is, "O wretched man that I am!" If I look at what I am in Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation. Dead to all that I am, as a child of Adam—dead to sin, dead to law, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Thus, being in and to another, to Christ Jesus raised from the dead, it is not only to bring forth fruit unto God, but "there is therefore now no condemnation." Do you get hold of this? Is there any condemnation possible to that risen Christ in the glory of God? Then, if you are in Him, how can there be condemnation to you?

The next words, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," are omitted in the best translations; we shall find them, however, as a result, in verse 4. Here they have at some time been inserted as a condition, or guard. We would, however, linger over and press this verse as the very foundation of deliverance. No soul

ever can know real deliverance from the power of sin that does not first know the unclouded favour of God in Christ. How marvellous, after such a chapter of bitter experience, after coming to the utter end of all hope of good in self, the old nature, to find that, as dead with Christ, and alive from the dead in Christ, we are in the unclouded favour of God, without condemnation! What perfect peace! Nothing to disturb, nothing to condemn. And it is God that speaks the word—"NO CONDEMNATION."

Dear young believer, is this the solid foundation on which, and in which, you stand? Then we will now look at

Verse 2. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." We have seen the terrible law, or power of sin; have we not also known and felt it? But what new law, or power, or principle, is this? Is it the power of my new nature as born of God? No; though, as such, I did delight in the law of God; but that did not make me free from the law of sin, as we have seen. But this does—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This is God the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; it is not now death, but the Spirit of life. Thus, as we have seen, we have a justified life. Now we have power—the law of the Spirit of life. Elsewhere we learn that the life we now have is eternal, and the Spirit is eternal. Thus the power we have is

eternal. We have seen that the flesh, or sin, is still in us—that which is born of the flesh; but here is DELIVERANCE from its power: made free from the law of sin and death; made free by infinite, eternal power, the law of the Spirit of life. It is not "will" do, but, "hath made me free." So terrible is our depraved old sinful nature, that, though born of God, and I delighted in the law of God, longed to keep it; yet the law of sin in my members brought me into captivity. Has it not been so? But now we are made free from its power, by a greater power—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Oh, for more simple faith in the word of God; yea, and also in the Holy Ghost dwelling in us! This verse sums up the whole of chapter vi. It is the principle of reckoning ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Jesus Christ, applied by the power of the Spirit.

Still, many a young reader may have this difficulty in passing through the experience of the utter badness of the flesh, as described in chapter vii. He may say, "I see how my sins were forgiven me; but to find since that, the old nature I have is so utterly bad; to have found no power in trying to keep the law of God, however much I desired to do so; to find, to my surprise, an evil nature, a law of sin, that held me captive; the law I longed to keep could only curse me; my very nature—sin in the flesh—only did that which

I hated and condemned. How, then, can you tell me there is *no* condemnation?" We will look at the next verse for an answer.

Verse 3. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here is what the law could not do, and what God has done. The law could not deliver from either the guilt or power of sin. It was weak either to deliver or help man in the flesh, for the flesh was sin; and if it acted under law, it could only transgress, even in one quickened and longing for deliverance.

Now just here arises this question: Is deliverance a matter of apprehension of truth, or mere knowledge of truth? Deliverance from Egypt answers that question. Like a quickened soul, they believed the word of God through Moses and Aaron (Ex. iii. 7–10; iv. 31, 32), and they longed for deliverance (chap. v. 1–3), and they, as it were, passed through the Romans (chap. vii.) in the brick-kilns of Egypt, and became more wretched than ever, and not delivered at all. Was it, then, increase of knowledge, or apprehension, that delivered them? Did the knowledge of the promises in Exodus vi. deliver them? Did the further knowledge of the providential favour of

God deliver them, in chapters vii. to xi.? Not in the least. They were delivered truly on the ground of redemption, but it was by the power of God.

Now there was no power in the holy law of God to deliver, its only prerogative was to curse the guilty. In Romans viii. 2, then, we have the power that has set me free from the law of sin and death. In verse 3 we have the helplessness of the law to deliver through the weakness of the flesh, and then how God has delivered, and the ground on which deliverance is wrought. This part also answers your difficulty—How can there be no condemnation to me, seeing the flesh is so utterly vile? "God sending his own Son." Just as when all had failed to deliver from Egypt, then the lamb is to be put up, and slain; the Israelite, though not yet delivered, was completely sheltered by the blood. So the ground of deliverance here, is "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or, a sacrifice for sin] condemned sin in the flesh." Not only delivered for our iniquities, and raised again for our justification, as we have already seen; but the atoning death of the sent Son of God for SIN—the very root. Thus now, both sins and sin having been condemned, judged, there is therefore nothing, positively nothing, left to condemn. Thus, on the ground of the atoning work of the Son, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives complete deliverance.

And as deliverance from Egypt was being brought out of one place, or condition, in bondage, into another in liberty; so the believer is, by the Spirit of life, brought out of one place, or condition, called "in the flesh," into another place, or condition, called "in Christ;" sin having been perfectly judged, by the Holy Son of God being made sin for us. And this, not that we should continue in bondage, but be free, delivered, that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Israel were in bondage then, now they were free, delivered, to serve Jehovah. So we, after we were quickened, were still in bondage to the flesh, or under law. Now we have learnt the utter badness of the flesh, and our powerlessness, and no longer seek its improvement. We are no longer in it, but in Christ, made free by the Spirit. We are now to walk after the Spirit, and the Spirit will act in us in power, on the ground of the work of Christ.

The flesh is given up by those "who walk not after the flesh." Another position is taken by those who walk "after the Spirit." There are, so to speak, two parties. (Ver. 5.) "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." The one is death, the other is life. And, further, the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God,

neither indeed can be. (Ver. 7.) Then it follows that they that are on that ground, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God.

Have you, dear young believer, come to that conclusion—that your old nature, the flesh, sin, is utterly incapable of pleasing God? It is a root that only bears evil, however you seek to improve it. It is only enmity against God. Do not listen to that abominable sentiment, that lust is not sin, unless you commit it in act. Sin is the very root of lust, as we see in chapter vii. 8. No, this very root had to be judged, and the infinite sacrifice was for SIN. "For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) On this ground alone we are delivered from the guilt and condemnation due to our sin, the flesh; and on this ground we are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Here comes in a deeply interesting question. When, and how, may we conclude, or know, that we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? This is a very important question for both young and old believers. Let us look at it most carefully.

There is no doubt, nay, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Yet there are different stages of the work of God in the soul, as we have seen typified in Israel's redemption.

Verse 9. This verse will answer the important question—When may we conclude we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Then, plainly, if the Spirit of God dwell in you, you may safely conclude you are not in the flesh. Is there, then, a distinct stage between the quickening, or new birth, of a soul, and the dwelling of the Spirit of God in us? Be it long or short, scripture bears out the fact in every case. Yes, in the case of Cornelius and his company, as well as in the baptised believers at Samaria, who did not receive the Holy Ghost until the apostles came down from Jerusalem.

Cornelius was evidently a quickened soul, and all his house (Acts x. 2), but not delivered, and hence it was that he was in the flesh, until the word came with the power of the Holy Ghost, and then the Holy Ghost Himself. (Ver. 44.) This, then, is the question—"Have ye received the Holy Ghost?" If not, though quickened, you are still in the flesh, seeking its improvement—it may be by works of law. Cornelius could not be said to be a Christian until he received the Holy Ghost; neither can you, in the full sense of the word, until you have received the Spirit. "Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

We met an aged man, the other day, who said he had been in Egypt thirty years. Where are

you, reader, in bondage, or delivered?—In the flesh, or in the Spirit? This is not a question to be trifled with.

Verse 10. This does not imply sin eradicated, or the evil nature improved. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." If the doctrine of perfection in the flesh were true, the body could neither be dead, nor could it die, for by sin came death. We see the effect of sin in the body, even death. "But the Spirit is life, because of righteousness." There is death, on account of sin; there is life, on account of righteousness—not ours, but the righteousness of God, accomplished by the death of His Son for us.

Is the body, then, to remain dead because of sin? No. (Ver. 11.) "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from among the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from among the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." How complete the victory of Christ! The redemption of our bodies is thus certain. Does the Spirit of God dwell in us? Then the quickening of our mortal bodies is certain.

We are not, then, in the flesh, though it is in us; but we are not debtors to it, to live after it. The end of sin, or flesh, is death. It is ever ready, we find, to our sorrow, to act in the body. "But if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." If our old nature was

not still left ready to act, we should not need to mortify the deeds of the body. It is not mortifying the body, but the deeds of the body. The great thing to see, is, that it is THROUGH THE SPIRIT. This is fully brought out in Galatians v. 16–25.

Verse 14. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Jesus said, "And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever." (John viii. 35.) We are not in bondage, but in the wondrous liberty and privileges of the Son. Was not this His first message by Mary, in resurrection? "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John xx. 17.) "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." (1 John iii. 1.)

And what is the proof of all this? "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." It is also said, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law." (Gal. v. 18.) Assuredly the Spirit cannot lead us under that ministration of law which is done away. (See 2 Cor. iii. 7–18.) As we have seen all along, for a believer to be placed under, or led under, law, is to be under the ministration of death and the curse. The Spirit will ever lead us to behold the glory of the Lord, and to be changed into the same glory

The Spirit gives liberty, not bondage. Which is your portion—the liberty of the sons of God, or the bondage of the servant, the slave? And the sons do not cease to be sons, and become slaves again.

Verse 15. "For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage AGAIN to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Can a son cease to be a son? Can Christ, the Son, cease to be the Son? Have we not heard from His lips that God is our Father, even as He is His Father? That relation can never change, can never cease to be. Oh, the riches of His grace! We, who are conscious that we only deserved His eternal wrath, to be brought into such an unchanging relationship — the sons of God. One spirit with the Son. No bondage or fear again, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby do we cry, as sinners, far from God, Have mercy upon us? No; but, Abba, Father. And mark, this is the very special witness of the Spirit.

Verses 16, 17. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Yes, the two great facts of which the Spirit bears witness, are these, in this scripture, to our abiding sonship, heirship; and in Hebrews x. he bears witness that we are perfected for ever, continu-

ously, by the one sacrifice of Christ; so that God will not remember our sins any more. Nothing is more frequently denied, or, at least, doubted, than these two blessed *facts*.

Yes, it is a fact, that we, if believers, are perfected for ever. And it is also a fact that we are joint-heirs with Christ. The Spirit bears witness. And mark, if we are joint-heirs of all the coming glory of Jesus—Son of man—do not overlook these few words; "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." That this was the case, see the whole history of the Acts. The world, and especially the religious part of it, hated the disciples of Christ, as they hated the Lord. And they suffered *with* Him. How is it that it is not so now? Because the religious world now pretends to be christian; and, alas! we sink very much to its level. But, in proportion as we are led by the Spirit, we shall certainly suffer the world's hatred. Do you, beloved reader, know anything of being led by the Spirit? or are you led by the organisations and plans of the religious world? If so, is there any wonder that you should be a stranger, both to the enjoyed relationship of a child of God, or of suffering for Christ's sake? Can you say you are led by the Spirit in your daily life—your shop, your business—or are you led simply by the maxims of the world? If so, you grieve the Spirit, and cannot enjoy the blessed relationship of sons of God—joint-heirs

with Christ. It is a wonderful thing to have the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, always abiding with us, well able to take care of us, and all our interests here below, as the children of God. Oh, to be led at all times by Him.

We cannot over-estimate or over-state the work of the Spirit, whether *in us*, as verses 2–13, or His work *for us*, verses 14–27. Then, to the end of the chapter, we shall find God for us, in all His eternal and absolute sovereignty—blessed ultimate purpose of God, that we may be also glorified together with Christ. Yes, let us remember this is the end God has in view, in all our sufferings and afflictions. Let every reader, however, know, that if he has not the Spirit of Christ, if that does not characterise him, he is none of His. And, further, if he is not suffering with Christ, it is most questionable whether he is a joint-heir of Christ, led by the Spirit.

Refuse to be led by the Spirit, and you *may* have the honours and applause of the religious world. If led of the Spirit, you will certainly be despised, as Christ was despised, and it will be your happy privilege to suffer *with* Him. But, oh, the glory so soon to be revealed in us. What a contrast! to be led by the Spirit, or to be led by the fashions of this world. Oh, how many there are that will sacrifice eternity for the fashions of this poor deceived world, and, all the while, pretend, yea, think, themselves Christians. Fatal de-

lusion! If this should be the state of any reader of these lines, may God use these words to awaken him out of this delusive slumber. Surely we all need these searching words: "If so be that we suffer with him."

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Who ever was better able to reckon on this matter than Paul? Bonds and imprisonments awaited him in every city—a life of constant suffering with Him he so loved to serve; yet he says, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Indeed, even "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." What a solution of the perplexing paradox of all creation! The groans of battlefields shall cease; the misery and poverty and degradation of the multitude; the sufferings of creation, shall come to an end.

Verse 21. "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." What a day will that be! Yes, creation must share in the glorious liberty. "He tasted death for every thing." It is a pleasant thought. If misery and death has reigned so long, and man's

sin so affected creation, even so the emancipation of creation shall be the result of the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Verse 22. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Mark, it is not for the salvation of our souls *we wait*, and hope, but for the redemption of the body. It may be from the grave, or it may be we shall be changed in a moment. It will be at the coming of the Lord. As to the body, even *we* have no relief from groaning, and suffering, until the coming of our Lord. We see not that yet, and therefore we wait and hope. It is a fatal mistake to suppose all this means that we do not know we have salvation; on the contrary, we *know* we have eternal life—"He that believeth HATH eternal life." There is no waiting or hoping for that. But we can wait in patience for the redemption of the body.

Verse 26. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to

the will of God." This is very blessed for us. He knoweth all that concerneth not only us, but the plans and purposes of God. We may be a few days', or years', distance of the redemption of the body. He surely knows what is suited for us in such circumstances. And God who heareth, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. If we do not pray in the Spirit, we shall be sure to ask for things quite inconsistent with the dispensation or period in which we live.

We now enter upon the third or last division of our chapter. We may not be able always to understand.

Verse 28. We can, however, say, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." We know this because God is absolutely for us. This is now brought out to the end of the chapter. "To them who are the called according to his purpose." God has not called us on account of any good in us, or any purpose in us. Let us carefully mark what His purpose was, for His call is the result of His purpose. This, then, is His purpose: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." He foreknew whom He should call; and He predestinated them, those whom He called, to this glorious destiny, to be like, conformed to the image of, His

Son. What a purpose that His Son should be the firstborn among many brethren! How great the privilege to be called to share this place of glory!

Verse 30. Let us not alter a single word to suit human thoughts or reason. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here all is of God, who cannot fail. This is His order. Predestinated; called; justified; glorified. From eternity to eternity. What a golden chain! What solid comfort to the sorely-tempted children of God! Has He called us? Then that proves He had predestinated us; and He has justified us; and will not fail to bring us to glory. Faith will surely trust Him. Unbelief would gladly let Satan reason all this foundation-truth away. Now "what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Yes, if God be thus for us, who is he, and what is he, that can be against us? See how God condescends to reason with us.

Verse 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" What a question? Thus it is manifest that all things must work together for good to us, since God spared not His own Son. What infinite and eternal love to deliver Him up for us all! We can expect all

things according to the immensity and character of that love.

Verse 33. Since it is God in His righteousness, as has been seen in this epistle, that is the Justifier, "God that justifieth;" "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Who is he that condemneth? If God is our Justifier, can any creature condemn us? It was God who shewed His acceptance of our ransom by raising Jesus from the dead for our justification. God delivered Him up for us all; and He raised Him from the dead for the justification of us all; and He is the unchanging righteousness of all God's elect. "Who is he that condemneth?" God cannot condemn us without condemning Him who was raised from the dead to be our righteousness. Our justification could not be more perfect, for it is all of God. Our justification, then, is of God, and complete and settled for eternity.

There is just one other question. Can any possible circumstance alter the love of Christ, or alter the love of God in Christ to us? There are so many who doubt the love of Christ unless we in some way continue to deserve it, that this is a serious question. Now is it not a great mistake to suppose that we ever did, or do, or shall deserve that love? But does the Spirit of God set before us our deservings?

Verses 34 to 39. How beautiful and simple: He sets Christ before us. Let us follow the word

sentence by sentence. "CHRIST THAT DIED." Did He die for us because we deserved His love? Was ever love like His, and for us when dead in trespasses and sins? "Yea, rather that is risen again." View Him risen from the dead to be the beginning of the new creation. For this express purpose—for our justification. And all when we deserved eternal wrath. "Who is even at the right hand of God." He who bore our sins, and was made sin for us, our Representative, is at the right hand of God, as it were in possession of that place for us. Now the enemy who deceived Eve would just step in here, and say, That is all true if you never sin after your conversion, but if any man who is a Christian should sin, then surely that sin will separate him from the love of Christ. Dear young believer, mind your shield is not down when the devil gives you this thrust. Precious answer, "Who also maketh intercession for us." Yes, "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.) From how many sins does that intercession preserve us! But to the point, if a believer, a child of God, through unwatchfulness, should sin, will He then still, in His own infinite unchanging love, plead the cause of the failing one? "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins," &c. (1 John ii. 1–2.) Yes, even

then, in unchanging love, He is the same Jesus, "who also maketh intercession for us." Thus all is of God and cannot fail. Read now the whole list in these verses, and let us, with the apostle, be persuaded that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is no condemnation to those whom God justifies, whom He accounts righteous. And there is no separation from the infinite and eternal love of God, to us in Christ Jesus our Lord."

CHAPTER IX.

It will be noticed, there is now a change in the epistle. The next three chapters form a parenthesis. The righteousness of God has now been fully revealed and explained in His dealings with, and bringing to Himself, both Jew and Gentile. Both alike guilty, and now both alike justified; so that there is no condemnation, and no separation from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. But if this be so, what becomes of all the special promises to Israel in the prophets? This is the subject taken up in these three chapters.

Had the apostle, who had so clearly brought out this truth of no difference *now* in God's dealings with both, ceased to love the nation of Israel? Nay, his love for them was so intense, that, like Moses of old, he had, as it were, been beside himself. He says, "I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." In some cases, that intense love carried him beyond the guidance of the Holy Ghost. (Acts xx. 22; xxi. 4, &c.) No doubt the Lord bore with His devoted servant, and overruled all for good—ours

at least—though Paul suffered imprisonment and death. How much this must have added to his grief of heart—to be hated and persecuted in every city by those he so deeply loved. How like his Lord, whom he so devotedly served.

Verse 4. He owns their full national privileges. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

What privileges! The adopted nation, with whom God had dwelt in the tabernacle. These privileges were never given to any other nation. The eternal God had become incarnate, taking flesh from that nation. All this is fully allowed. He who is over all, God blessed for ever, as to the flesh, the body, He was born of Mary, of the seed royal of that nation.

But now another principle is brought out. God had, unquestionably, made a difference, even in the seed of Abraham. The seed of Abraham were not all the elect, adopted children of promise. "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." "The children of the promise are counted for the seed." A multitude sprang from Abraham; but Ishmael was rejected, and in Isaac alone was the chosen seed.

There was the same purpose of God in the elec-

tion of Jacob. It was said unto Sarah, "The elder shall serve the younger." It was also written, though many hundreds of years after, by Malachi, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This matter of the free, sovereign favour of God is of great moment for Paul's explanation; and no one who believed the scriptures could doubt it, in the cases referred to above; and God had said to Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Surely, then, God had a sovereign right to shew mercy to the Gentiles, the very thing that so offended the Jews. It is remarkable how all that say they are Jews now, or take Jewish ground, always dispute the sovereign grace of God.

Many learned men deny divine sovereignty, but God is wiser than men. We must not forget that man is proved by the cross to be at enmity with God. He has no desire, naturally, toward God.

Verse 16. "So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." This is very humbling, but surely true.

Verse 17. Pharaoh is given as a sample of the wickedness of man, and God's just judgment upon him. How long God bore with his daring infidelity and rebellion, until, in the just government of God, he was given up, hardened, to his own destruction. Let every rebel against God

beware, lest Pharaoh's doom be his own. Pharaoh was a blasphemer. He said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." (Ex. v. 2.) Let the scoffer of this day beware, lest his heart be hardened against the Lord, to his eternal destruction. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth." Men may say, If that is the case, "why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" Did not Pharaoh resist God? Have not you resisted and refused God? "Who art thou that repliest against God?" Has the mere creature, the thing formed, a right to ask, "Why hast thou made me thus?" Nay, has God formed me thus? Far from it. Is He the Author of all man's rebellion and sin? Mark, it is not a statement, but a question—"Hath not the potter power over the clay?" &c. Is not God Sovereign? It does not say He has made some unto dishonour. His wrath against all ungodliness is made known, but how long has He first endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? Did not Pharaoh fit himself to destruction? So of every sinner.

It is, however, most blessedly true, that He afore prepares the vessels of mercy unto glory. As to that, it is all sovereign favour: according to the riches of His glory. "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the

vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Man fits himself unto destruction, as the Jews were doing. God fits the vessels of mercy to glory.

Verse 24. "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," quoting Hosea in proof of this: "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved," &c. Thus does he prove, from their own prophet, that mercy should be shewn to the Gentiles.

Then he quotes from Isaiah, and shews that it is only a remnant of Israel that shall be saved. Yea, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha." Surely their rejection of Jesus, whom God had made both Lord and Christ, proved their guilt could not be greater. But human perversity did go even beyond this. They had KILLED the Just and Holy One of God, and even then clung to the law for righteousness.

Verse 30. "What shall we say, then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." The Jews sought righteousness by keeping the law, but never reached it. Is it not so to this day? All who take Jewish ground, and seek to be righteous

by keeping law—no matter what law—they never reach it. They never can be sure they are sufficiently righteous for God to justify them, thus they never attain to peace with God. The more religion an unconverted man has, the more difficult it is for the gospel to reach him. And why did they not attain to righteousness or justification? "Wherefore? BECAUSE they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone."

And how did the Gentiles arrive at righteousness, and peace with God? They heard the glad tidings of mercy to them, through the Redeemer's blood; they believed God; they were justified; they had, believing God, peace with God. Is it not even so now? The gospel is heard by a person brought up under law, hoping, some day, to keep it so as to be righteous, and then hopes, in another world, after the judgment-day, to have eternal life, and peace with God. Often filled with gloomy doubts—even forebodings of eternal wrath—he tries human expedients—a priesthood, to whom he unburdens, if sincere, the darkness of his soul, the weight of his sins, and the dread of the future. Does he attain to a righteousness that fits him for the presence of God? Never. Will any other religious expedient give this blessed peace with God? Not one.

How different, when a poor, guilty, ignorant, heavy-laden sinner hears the gospel, and believes

it, like the Gentiles of old! They had not the law, and did not seek righteousness by its works. They heard the sweet story of the love of God to sinners such as they. They heard how God had pitied them—yea, had given His beloved Son to die for them; that He had died, the Just for the unjust; that God had raised Him from the dead. They heard the glad tidings of forgiveness of sins through Him; they heard, they believed, they were justified from all things, they had peace with God.

Dear reader, have you so heard, so believed? Are you thus justified? If so, have you not peace with God? But our next chapter will bring all this out more fully.

CHAPTER X.

THE apostle here pauses a little. It is the pressure of his heart's love. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." They had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. He was greatly distressed at the troublers, who sought to pervert the Galatians; yea, even longed that they would cut themselves off. But how he grieved over the mass of deceived Jews. Are we so grieved for the mass around us? Can we say our heart's desire and prayer to God for them, is, that they might be saved?

Verse 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." You will remember the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. (See chap. i. 17; iii. 21–25.) Thus the Jews who rejected the gospel, of necessity remained in ignorance of that righteousness. And thus it is at this day, all who refuse the revelation, that God is just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly, must, if at all anxious to be saved, seek to establish their own righteousness; and thus

refuse to submit to the fact that God is righteous in justifying freely, through the redemption there is in Christ Jesus.

The Father's meeting of the prodigal in Luke xv., will illustrate this subject. The prodigal, like the poor Gentile, had come to himself. The whole parable is most striking: the shepherd had come to seek the lost sheep, yes, He has, as we know, died for it. The Holy Ghost has been sent down from heaven and seeks the lost. And now the father has his full joy in receiving the lost son; he, the father, came to meet him. Deep exercise of conscience had taken place in the prodigal. A sense that there was plenty in the father's house, and a readiness to confess his sin, this always marks the Spirit's work. But as yet he was ignorant of the best robe. He hoped to be a servant, like every human heart, but totally ignorant of all that was in store. He had his rags, his guilt, his shame. He owned all this to his father. Had he a robe for the father? He had nothing but rags. Did the father tell him he must make a robe, a garment to fit him for his house? No. The father had a robe for him. Oh, look at the father, "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." This is how God meets the repentant sinner in his rags without a robe. The father said: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on

him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." Thus joy fills the heart of God to receive the lost sinner. Not so the elder brother, he prefers to work out a righteousness of his own. What a contrast! Sad and fatal mistake! The prodigal had no robe for the father. He had nothing but rags and sin. The Father had the best robe, the righteousness of God for the prodigal. Yes, and the ring for his hand, everlasting love: and the walk provided for, shoes for his feet. All things new and all of God.

Now Israel, like the elder brother, would not have this compassion, and righteousness of God. Indeed they were ignorant of it. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." They had followed after the law of righteousness; they had tried to keep the law so as to be righteous. They had tried to make a robe to bring to God; but were ignorant of the best robe that God had to give to them. Is this your case, reader? are you trying to make out, to work out a righteousness, to bring to God? Do you say, Must I not try to keep the law so as to be good, and fit for the presence of God? Do you not see your mistake? are you not trying to bring the robe to God? What then is the best robe?

Verse 4. "For Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth." Yes,

Christ is the best robe—the end of all the requirements, and all the sacrificial types of the law. God hath made him to be unto us righteousness. We need no other, to go into the presence of God our Father. Practical righteousness before men is another question, but not the subject here.

"Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth these things shall live by them." But the prodigal had not done these things. And we have not done these things: we are guilty and have no righteousness to bring to God. But believing God, He can, and does reckon us righteous; and that by a work DONE, not something which has to be done. Christ has not to come down from heaven to die on the cross. He has once been down here and died for our sins. He has not to be raised from the dead, all is done, it is finished. Just as the father met the prodigal, the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." This was just what Israel would not do. They would not confess that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had rejected and crucified, both Lord and Christ. They would cling to the law for righteousness, and they would not in their hearts believe on Christ as their righteousness before God. How many are doing the same to this day! They will seek to be

righteous, but never attain to it. They never know the righteousness of God in justifying them the moment they believe.

Verse 11. Now the apostle quotes their own scripture in proof. "For the scripture saith, WHOSOEVER believeth on him shall not be ashamed." This proves there must be a time when the no difference doctrine should be in force. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (or Gentile): for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For WHOSOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Joel ii. 32.) What a blessed fact is this: all, whether Jew or Gentile, that really come to the Lord, calling on Him, are as sure of a welcome, as was the prodigal. Which of these do you prefer, reader? If even it were possible, would you prefer that you had never sinned, and that you had wrought a righteousness fit to bring unto God, thus bringing a robe to God; or, owning all that you are, and all you have done, and now as a hell-deserving sinner, confessing with your mouth, and believing with your heart the Lord Jesus, your ever subsisting righteousness before God? We cannot abhor ourselves too much; but oh, that deep compassion to meet us just as we are, and clothe us with the best robe, the ring, and shoes. And how is this righteousness of God made known? Read verses 14, 15 for the answer. By hearing the word, the sent gospel of peace.

What glad tidings! Those who sought righteousness by law hated those good tidings and the preachers of the gospel. It is exactly so to this day, by all who say they are Jews and are not. Is it not a most astounding fact that man should hate and reject his greatest good, the gospel of peace? He will try or hope to try some day to make his own peace with God. But he will not have the peace made by the blood of Jesus; the peace preached to them that are afar off, and them that are nigh. Yes, peace proclaimed to all. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, "Lord who hath believed our report." The word of the gospel was preached to all Israel: but they would not believe it. It is preached now, perhaps as it never was before, to all Christendom; but they will not believe it. We shall see the final result of all this in the next chapter.

God has His own, in spite of all man's perverseness, whether Jews or Gentiles, as Isaiah boldly said, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." Thus has the apostle proved the two things from their own Old Testament scriptures; no difference, and the sovereignty of God. Whosoever, Jew, or Greek, shall call upon the Lord shall be saved—and oh, blessed soul-sustaining truth, He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. Was Israel then lost because God was not willing to save them? "But to Israel, he

saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." They would not come unto Him: they refused the best robe, the ring, the shoes. May this not be the case with the readers of these lines. He that cometh unto Him shall in no wise be cast out.

CHAPTER XI.

"I SAY then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid." Paul himself was a proof of this, for he was an Israelite. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." It is not God who hath rejected His ancient people: "He saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." It is important to see this side of the truth—the perfect readiness of God that Israel—nay, that all men—should be saved. It is man that is the rebel, the breaker of the law, and now the rejecter of the mercy of God.

But then there is the other side also. When Israel had so rebelled against God, that Elijah said, he alone was left. He said:

Verse 3. "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." Here we have the deep, universal rejection and hatred of man against God. This is man in the full exercise of his own will. But has God left all men to their own free choice and wicked course?

"But what saith the answer of God unto him? I HAVE RESERVED to myself seven thousand men,

who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." God does not say they have reserved, or preserved, themselves; no, He says, "I have reserved." Just as we have seen in chapter ix., if God had not done this, they would all have been as Sodom and Gomorrha.

Verse 5. "Even so, then, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Yes, at that very time none could deny that the nation, as such, was mad in its hatred and rejection of Christ. Saul himself was a proof of the exceeding madness of the Israelites against Christ. But, just as in the days of Elijah, there was then an election of grace, of free, unmerited favour of God. Dear young believer, you will be greatly tempted to reject this abounding, electing, free favour of God. In this day few heartily believe it. We would have you embrace it with your whole soul. Is it not evident that both Israel and we Gentiles are so bad, such utter rejecters of the grace of God, that, if it had not been for His election, in free favour, grace, none would have been saved—all, all would have been like Sodom. Yes, the total ruin of man, and the election of God, stand or fall together. You cannot truly hold the one, and reject the other. Mark, these scriptures shew there is no unwillingness on God's part, but man will not have the grace of God. When this is seen, how precious to the believer is the blessed truth of the election

of grace! "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." (Ver. 6.) This is self-evident. Salvation by works, of whatever kind, must set aside the free favour of God. Do you stand in the free, full, everlasting favour of God; or are you seeking to attain to it by works?

This is just what Israel were doing, but "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." With all their hatred of God, as revealed in Christ, they were, at the same time, zealous of the law, and seeking righteousness by works. Rejecting the free favour of God, they never would obtain it by works. On this very account their city was destroyed, and they were scattered or slain. "But the election hath obtained it," that is, the free favour of God in which they stood. And, as to the rest, the rejecters of free, unmerited favour, they "were blinded." And the scriptures are abundantly quoted, to prove that this would be so in verses 8–10.

Now here are two facts. The prophets have foretold that these rejecters would be given up to judicial blindness, and this has really been so for long centuries. If a self-conceited rejecter of the truth of the election of grace should read this, oh, beware lest He give you up also to blindness and hardness of heart. How long has God held

out His hands ready to receive you? And are you still a rejecter, like self-righteous Israel? God may, in righteous judgment, give you up to hardness of heart, and to the darkness fast setting in.

But will the present rejection of the grace of God by Israel, and their consequent blindness, ultimately alter the purpose and promise of God? We must now look carefully at the dispensational bearing of this question. God had overruled their fall for great blessing to the Gentiles. And, if this be the case, how much greater will be the blessing of their fulness? The Gentile world had been given up to gross idolatry, as stated in chapter i. But now, if the casting away of Israel as a nation has been "the reconciling of the world," what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? The apostle is not here speaking of the calling, or heavenly privileges, of the church, but of earthly privileges.

When God called out Abraham, and separated him from the nations, he became the olive-tree of blessing and promise on earth. His seed became that tree of privilege, of which he was the root. It is not a question, then, of being branches in Christ but branches of the olive-tree of promise, or privilege. Relative holiness, too, or separation from the world. Some of the natural branches were broken off—not all Israel, but some. And, to carry out the figure, Gentiles had been graffed into this olive-tree of privilege.

Let not the Gentile boast, however: he says, "Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." And mark, it was because of unbelief they were broken off. It was not because God willed to break them off, but because of their own unbelief. And the Gentile stands by faith. "Be not high-minded, but fear." There was judgment, severity, towards Israel, which fell through unbelief; but toward the Gentiles goodness—"If thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." God is also able to graff Israel in again.

It is also utterly contrary to nature to graff the wild olive into the good. In all nature, the good olive, or apple, is graffed into the wild. But God had taken the poor wild Gentile, and graffed him into the good Abrahamic tree of privilege. And, further, the apostle would not have them ignorant of this dispensational truth, "that blindness, in part, is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written," &c. (Vers. 25, 26.) Thus the time of "no difference" shall come to a close; the purpose of God in gathering out of the Gentiles shall be accomplished; then all Israel shall be saved, as it is written. Then shall every promise to them be fulfilled. The whole then spared nation of Israel shall be gathered to their own land, and then be born of God, as it is written. Such is the purpose of God, though they are the bitterest enemies now; God elects so to do.

Verse 29. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He never changeth. Not one jot or tittle of His word can fail. The literal translation of verses 30, 31 is important. "For as indeed ye [also] once have not believed in God, but now have been objects of mercy, through the unbelief of these; so these also have now not believed in your mercy, in order that they also may be objects of mercy." This is very wonderful, and shews out the principle—He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. The Gentiles had no claim to salvation; they were dead in sins, in unbelief. God shewed them pure mercy. Israel would not believe such mercy, and forfeited all their privileges through unbelief, that so God might at last save them as a whole nation, but as objects of mercy. "For God hath shut up together all in unbelief, in order that he might shew mercy to all." "O the depth of the riches," &c. Not one shall be found in the church above, or in the future kingdom of God on earth, but what has been saved as an object of mercy. The free favour of God in both cases thus reigns triumphant.

One word, before we close this chapter on the solemn warning, that if Gentile Christendom does not abide in His goodness, it, too, will be cut off. Was there ever a time when the goodness, the free favour, of God were more distinctly rejected than the present moment? Never, since the days of

the apostles, has the full, free grace of God been so preached, and therefore never so rejected. We lately visited a large town, where an excellent large room had been built, for the preaching of the pure gospel of the grace of God. It was closed. Another very large building was occupied by those who are, like Israel of old, seeking to attain to righteousness by works, and ritual, and the barely concealed Mass. Standing and sitting room was crowded. Will God bear this for ever? Surely the end is near. The Gentile branches must be cut off. Thus has the Spirit of God explained this period of "no difference," in these three chapters—ix., x., xi. After its close there will come the dispensation of the kingdom of Christ, as foretold in all the prophets. And at that time all Israel will be saved, as objects of His mercy. "To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

This closes the doctrinal part of this most wonderful revelation of the righteousness of God, in His dealings with man. the reading of which will profit us nothing, unless made good in our souls by the Holy Ghost. Has He, as we have passed along its wondrous pages, thus used His own word? Have we truly owned ourselves as ruined, ungodly sinners? Have we learnt that there neither has been, nor can be, any good in the flesh? Have we believed God, who hath raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was de-

livered for our offences? Have we individually gone over those offences, and seen that they were transferred to our holy Substitute? Can we say He was raised from the dead for MY justification? Surely, then, we are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, standing in this abounding free favour of God, what should be our walk? Yea, further, being made free, and having the Spirit of life, what should be the fruit? The remaining chapters give the answer to these questions.

CHAPTER XII.

We come now to practical righteousness, the state and walk of those who have been made the recipients of the grace of God, who have been taken up in sovereign, free favour, justified from all things; without condemnation *in Christ*. It is by this very compassion of God that these precepts are addressed to them. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies [or compassion] of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable [or intelligent] service." It certainly does require some intelligence, as to these bodies, to yield them up thus in intelligent service. We are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Chap. viii. 23.) They are about to be fashioned like unto His glorious body. We are about to bear the image of the heavenly. Even as to our bodies, we shall soon see Him, and be like Him. (Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. xv. 48; 1 John iii. 2.)

Now, having intelligence as to all this, we can give up our bodies beforehand, to be His now, to be used in holy separation to Him, and for Him. What a privilege! But this cannot possi-

only be, if we are conformed to this world—a world at enmity with Him. And as we have been renewed in spirit, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

If God has saved us, in pure mercy and compassion, then let us intelligently seek to know His will, prove what that will is. This will require spiritual intelligence as to the time or dispensation in which we are found. The good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God as to this can only be known and proved in lowliness of soul and entire dependence.

Verse 3. "For I say, through the grace given unto me." What a constant need of the sense of the free favour shewn to us individually, and given unto us! It is this that enables us to have low thoughts of self, and to think soberly, or to think so as to be wise, as God has dealt to each a measure of faith.

Verses 4, 5. As there was one nation *in the flesh* in the past dispensation, and a covenant of commandments adapted to that dispensation, "so we, being many, are one body IN CHRIST, and every one members one of another." What a contrast this is to Israel; and we must have intelligence as to this, or we cannot prove the excellent will of God to us now. In the past no person could be in Christ. Christ must die, and be raised

from the dead, or remain alone; but now we are one body in Christ. And this truth must rule all our obedience to Christ. We are to act in union, like the various members of the human body, even as we are one body in Christ. It is not so much the doctrine of the one body here, as the practice of all the members of that one body.

Verse 6. Still ever remembering, "Having, then, gifts differing according *to the grace* that is given to us." Surely, whatever may be the service in the one body in Christ, it is all grace, all free favour. With this blessed sense of the free favour of God, let us be diligent in the service, whatever it may be—whether prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, or ruling. Let all be done with cheerfulness, and thus these heavenly precepts are so plain, they need no explanation, further than seeing all must be done in reference to the one body in Christ. And yet each precept is of the utmost importance, and can only be kept as walking in the Spirit; indeed, these are fruits of the Spirit. Will the flesh, still in us, "cleave to that which is good," or, "in honour preferring one another," or will it "bless them which persecute you"? Nay, it will ever persecute that which is born of the Spirit.

Verse 16 should be, "Have the same respect one for another, not minding high things, but going along with the lowly." The very opposite of this world's ways.

Verses 17, 19. How liable we are to forget this blessed teaching; how ready the flesh is to return evil for evil. And how sad when indolence takes the place of providing things honest in the sight of all men. Yea, without care, the Christian may fall into the almost universal dishonesty of the world. Is not a deceitful, dishonest transaction of the same character as highway robbery? These are words that need to be put up in every office, shop, and house: "PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN." Oh, for more faith and unswerving obedience in the common things of every-day life. We are persuaded it is carelessness in these things, if not worse than carelessness, that is the cause of much of our weakness. And how the flesh in each of us would avenge ourselves! But these are the words of the Spirit to us: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves," &c.

Did He, whose precious name we bear, avenge Himself? The day of vengeance, of judgment on an ungodly world, will come; but are we not the followers of Him who healed His enemy's ear? Oh, to be more like Him. What tender words are these: "if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." Where shall we find such words apart from the inspired scriptures of truth? Leave man to himself, will he act thus? No, no, these are the precious fruits of the Spirit. May they abound in us more and more.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE path of the heavenly man on earth is continued. What is to be his conduct as to the government of this world? He is to be subject. He is to regard the powers of government that be, as appointed of God. He is to be far from lawlessness and insubordination. "And they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment" [or, bring guilt upon themselves]. The Christian is to be, of all men, most loyal, even for conscience sake. "Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

Let it be observed, there is no precept here that we should take a place, or part, in the world's politics; but be subject. The church, or the Christian, is always looked at as not of the world, yet, in it, he must be subject: whatever the form of government, his path is to be subject; and, dear young believer, God is wiser than we are.

Chapter xiii. 8. "Owe no man anything." These few words are very comprehensive. Not merely debts when due, but to seek to pay all demands as soon as due. To do this, a Christian should

always seek to live below his income, and do his business within his means. This may require much diligence and self-denial, but what misery will he avoid. These words, then, are important, when applied as to income and expenditure. And also, whatever kindness may be shewn us, let us seek to return it with large interest. "Owe no man anything, unless to love one another" (New Translation). Ah, that is a debt never fully paid, for it is to love one another as He hath loved us.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Rom. v. 5.) Now, in its exercise, it flows out to others—the love of God in our hearts by the Spirit—and the result is, "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Thus the commands as to our neighbour are all fulfilled. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is by the twofold power of the love of God, already shed abroad in our hearts, and by the Spirit which has been given. This is not putting the Christian under law again, and telling him, if he keep it, God will love him, and give him the Holy Spirit. Neither is it telling him to pray for the Spirit, that he may keep the law. It is the opposite of all this. The love of God and the Spirit he has, and love worketh no ill to his neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. How beautiful the order of God is, and the effect is never put before the cause.

Verses 11–13. Again, there must be intelligence, in order "that, KNOWING the time," &c. But if Christians do not know the time, but suppose the very contrary, that the world is about to be converted, or to get better, that the night is not far spent, indeed that it is not night at all, but a grand day of development and human advancement—if thus so dark and mistaken, how can they know the perfect will of God for walk, of holy separation from a world doomed to judgment? Is it not impossible?

What a word for this moment!—"Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. . . . . The night is far spent, the day is at hand." What an arousing motive for holiness! Beware of all pretended holiness that has not this intelligence and this motive. What! is the Lord at hand, and we, Christians, asleep?—whether we think of joy to us, for ever with the Lord—how near now our salvation—or the day of wrath and judgment on a rejecting world. "Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." If the world is steeped in dishonesty in this dark night, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day." What a change there would be in the conduct, even of Christians, if we were really to awake, to expect our Lord, day by day.

Should you like to be found of Him walking in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wan-

tonness, or in strife and envying? Surely not. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Oh, that we may awake from sleep, and, waiting for our Lord, thus put Him on. The world will not hear the gospel—they will not read Christ in the word. May they, then, see Christ in us, and in all we do—living epistles, read and known of all men.

They will look at us, narrowly will they watch us. They know not how Satan seeks to trip us up. They know not the temptations and buffetings of the believer, and, without constant dependence on the power of God, how liable to fail. But may the world never see us making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. The Lord bless these precious precepts to both writer and reader. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Oh, how soon we shall be for ever with the Lord!

CHAPTER XIV.

"Now, him that is weak in the faith receive not to (the) determining of questions of reasoning." (New Translation.) We may make a mistake either way. We may become so narrow as to reject a brother weak in faith, or we may make our receiving a cavilling person, the determining of doubtful questions, and reasoning speculations. The Holy Ghost would have us carefully avoid both these extremes. In many things such as eating and drinking, esteeming one day holy, or all days alike—in all such matters, we are not to judge one another, but walk together in love.

Verse 10. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand [or be placed] before the judgment-seat of Christ." This is not a question of being brought into the judgment for sins, or sin. That has been settled earlier in the Epistle. (Chap. viii. 1, 33, 34.) The Lord assures us this shall not be. (John v. 24.) What then is meant here? Simply the question in hand. The fact that all will be placed before God, who cannot make a mistake in what He approves, should be a wholesome check in preventing the injurious habit

of judging one another. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more."

Surely this does not teach us to be indifferent when the Person of Christ, or the truth in Him, is attacked: for Paul had to withstand even a Peter to his face. But it does teach us "that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." To do so, is not to walk according to love. A weak brother might, by seeing me eat things offered to idols, be led to do so, and his conscience being defiled, he might fall into idolatry, and get, for the time being, under the power of Satan, and, as to fellowship, away from Christ; in fact, just where a wicked person had to be put for the destruction of the flesh. (1 Cor. v. 5.) This would be destroying a brother, instead of the flesh, or, on the other hand, his conscience might be destroyed. In any case love would seek to put no stumbling-block in a brother's way.

We have also known cases where a person has observed the Lord's day as the Sabbath, in a pious but Jewish way. Another person to shew his superior knowledge has done things on the Lord's day which were a desecration in the eyes of the former; and the result has been most disastrous to both. For years both conscience and communion were lost or destroyed. Do not, however, for a moment suppose that these words "destroy not him," &c., can possibly mean the destruction of

eternal life. Scripture cannot contradict itself. If it seems to do so, it is evident we have not got the true sense of one at least of the texts. If the eternal life we have in Christ could be destroyed, then it would not be eternal. And of those who have eternal life, Jesus says, "they shall never perish," that is enough for faith. It is, however, a most wholesome and important thing to have the judgment-seat of Christ constantly before us. It would preserve us from much judging, or even devouring one another.

The great point here is serving Christ acceptably to God. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." These are precious words: righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. If God reigns in our hearts, there will be consistency, that which is consistent with the holy place we are in. "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." This will lead us to do nothing, whether in eating flesh or drinking wine, whereby a brother may be stumbled. This must not, however, lead us to compromise the gospel. Had Paul also refused to eat with the Gentiles lest he should offend Peter, that would not have been for edification, but would have compromised the gospel. It was saying Christ is not enough for

your eternal salvation, you must also keep the law. Thus by some the law was held as superior to Christ. In like manner, if a society of men were to say, Christ alone is not enough for the deliverance of a sinner and his complete salvation, you must take a pledge with us not to drink wine—it would not be of faith, or love, or edification, thus to compromise the gospel. It would soon be, as with the Judaising teachers, to seduce from Christ. If Christ has not the pre-eminence, something else soon will have. Satan ever seeks to use that which is good to displace Christ. Law is good, temperance is good ; but let us watch lest we use either to rob us of Christ. We need to be kept on the right hand, and on the left. These remarks are only intended to apply where temperance is put in the place of Christ. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind, and let us each remember "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Let us ask ourselves in the presence of God, do I need this for my body which is the Lord's? Is there any brother I know, who will be stumbled if I take it? Have I faith, is it pleasing to the Lord that I take it, or that I do this?

And let us be very careful as to boasting in these matters, or in judging our brother. "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself BEFORE GOD. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

CHAPTER XV.

THE apostle says, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." How tender then we ought to be now in these days when all are weak, and feeble together. "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." Is not this truly lovely? Where shall we find it perfectly exemplified? Oh, there is One, yes, one only perfect One. "FOR EVEN CHRIST pleased not himself." No self-vindication; "but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." His eye ever on and up to the Father, He was the expression, the revelation of the Father, God manifest. And all the reproaches He felt to be against His Father. He answered not again, He pleased not Himself, but His ineffable delight was to bear all, and do the will of Him that sent Him.

"Now, the GOD OF PATIENCE and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." What a prayer! how needed at all times, but more especially in these last days of discord. He is the perfect copy; it is "according to Christ Jesus." He has received us to the glory of God, yes, as objects of mercy accord-

ing to the riches of His grace. Let us never forget how He has received us, in receiving one another. Then the scriptures are quoted to shew how grace has, and was, to abound to the Gentiles. This shewed that Jewish believers were not to reject them.

It is also to be observed, that these scriptures will have their complete fulfilment in the millennial kingdom. "There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."

Then follows another prayer, "Now, the GOD OF HOPE fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." How distinctly the state of the soul is connected with the coming of the Lord, though it is not the subject of this Epistle! May we know our Father as the God of patience, and the God of hope.

Verse 14. In this verse it must be noted that there is no thought of the first bishop of Rome. "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish ONE ANOTHER." Now is it not remarkable that in the whole of this inspired letter to the saints at Rome, there is not a single sentence that can have the slightest recognition of, or reference to, such a person as a bishop of Rome. The brethren were able to admonish one another; and each was responsible according to the measure of grace bestowed, as

in chapter xii. The first bishop of Rome and his successors are a pure invention of after times.

Had Peter been, or any other brother THE BISHOP of Rome, Paul must here have recognised him as such. Does he not rather declare his own apostleship, as minister of the Gentiles. (Verses 16–20.) All this to Paul was the free favour of God, "because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles," &c. And the result of all this blessed favour, he could offer up to God, "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Now, all thus being of the free favour of God, he could glory. "I have therefore, whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God." The young believer will do well to ponder these precious divine principles of service—how the Gentiles had been made obedient to the gospel. Through mighty signs and wonders, by (not human wisdom or eloquence, but) the power of the Spirit of God. And what a mission to the Gentiles! And mark, the true work of this evangelist, not to build on another's foundation. "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named," &c. This is most important. Oh, think even in this day, how many thousands of nominal Christians are in the towns and villages, who have never heard the gospel. And in many places, there is a real thirst for the simple truth. It is most cheering to know how

God in sovereign grace is using tracts. Still, it is pleasing in His sight, that His saints should not only spread these in faith, in regions beyond, but also the evangelist take the glad tidings everywhere, "and round about."

Some may say, we are not evangelists. No, but you can help the evangelist; let him be well supplied with tracts and books: these greatly help him in his blessed work in winning souls to God, and in building them up when converted. You can help, perhaps, most in prayer, and sympathy. You can help him to take lodgings in the distant village. In a word, if our hearts are stirred up in the sympathy of Christ for precious souls, He will open a way in which we can be fellow-helpers in this work. The Lord give us more of the yearning after souls we have in these verses.

Verse 22. "For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you . . . and having a great desire, these many years, to come unto you." Here a fact of no little importance is recorded.

The Holy Ghost well knew the future arrogance of the professing church, and how Rome would be the ultimate head of those pretensions. He has therefore carefully excluded all knowledge as to who first preached Christ at Rome. It is evident, from these words, that the apostle of the Gentiles had, as yet, never been there. Neither is there a particle of evidence that either Peter, or any other apostle, had been there when it was founded,

and the brethren were able to edify one another. We also learn that this epistle was written about the time that Paul went up to Jerusalem, to carry the contributions to the poor saints. That is a little before he was sent a prisoner to Rome. (Acts xx., xxi., &c.) He did not know what means the Lord would employ to send him to Rome. Let us learn in this that the Lord can, and will, accomplish all His purpose.

Verse 29. "And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Yes, and though bonds and imprisonment, and the fierce Euroclydon, awaited him as companions to Rome, yet his Lord did not disappoint him. It was from Rome, and at Rome, the Lord used him in bringing out the fulness of the gospel in the revelation of the church. And from thence he sent the precious stream of truth to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Thus, in the severest storms of life, we may rest in patience, assured that He doeth all things well. In verses 30, 31 we see how the apostle valued the prayers of saints he had never seen; and yet the Lord answers those prayers in His own way.

He has in this chapter spoken of God as "the God of hope," and "the God of patience." "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." Thus we surely need to know Him as the God of hope, patience, and peace. How important thus to know Him in these last and difficult days.

CHAPTER XVI.

We now have the closing remarks and salutations. The Lord would not have the devoted Phebe forgotten. She was a deaconess, or servant, of the church in Cenchrea. "That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." These verses throw much light on the true character of the deacon, as appointed by the apostles before the failure of the church set in so sadly. There is not a shadow of the modern clerical idea. "A succourer of many." Evidently this was in temporal things. She was to be received IN THE LORD, in that relationship. And what beautiful love and care. She is to be assisted in whatsoever business she has in Rome. It might then be said, See how these Christians love one another.

At this time, also, we find Priscilla and Aquila in Rome, and their devotedness is noted. There were no St. Peters then, but "the church that is in their house." And, unto verse 16, we have various companies of saints, which appear to belong to different houses, all forming the one

assembly of God in Rome. (See verses 14, 15.) "And the brethren that are with them;" or, "all the saints which are with them." There were those then that took an oversight of these several companies of brethren, or saints. Such were called elders, or overseers, in other early epistles. But why is there no Bishop of Rome addressed? Simply and evidently because there was no such person. Nay, it is most remarkable that there is not one word in this Epistle that can be used as an authority for the episcopacy of Rome. How strikingly this displays the foreknowledge and wisdom of God!

Now contrast the Rome of that day with this. To return to the church as it was in Rome, as found in these salutations, what should we find? No pope or bishop of Rome, no cardinals, no clergy, no monks or nuns; not a single priest performing mass; no grand buildings, called churches. But we should find different gatherings of saints by calling, knowing their sins forgiven; justified from all things; having peace with God; able to admonish one another. All these assemblies, in certain houses or places, were under the care of the Holy Ghost, and labouring brethren are named in each company—the whole being members of the one body of Christ. We are compelled to own that there is no similarity whatever between the church in Rome in the year 60, and the Church of Rome in these days.

Rome is evidently a departure from the true church of God.

Is it not remarkable that the only official person named—if we may so regard the deaconess—is a woman. And, lest the persons saluted should be regarded, or referred to, as priests, or *episcopoi*, women are named amongst them. How beautiful it was when they were thus brethren dwelling together in the unity of the Spirit, and some of the brethren labouring much in the Lord—such as "the beloved Persis." Dear young believer, is there any reason why we should not be content with the same simplicity now?

Verse 17. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause [or form] divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." There are two things here we must carefully notice. Division is an evil in itself—it is strongly condemned in other scriptures. (See 1 Cor. i., iii.) We also learn, that if any are practising that evil, by causing or forming divisions, contrary to the doctrine they had received, others were to avoid them; that is, to separate from them. But if believers do thus separate from and avoid those who form divisions, do they not also form a sect, or division? No, obedience to the word is not division. And, further, those who cause divisions may always be known by the spirit in which they act. "For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus

Christ," &c. We never go wrong if Christ is the only object. Happy is it when it can be said, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men." "Yet I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil." It is most deadening to all spiritual life to be occupied with evil.

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." That is certain: whether he persecutes or seduces, it is but for a little while. He still is the accuser, but shortly he will be cast down. In the meantime, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." This is repeated—verses 20, 24. Yes, the grace, the unclouded favour, unchanging love, sovereign and free, be with you all. Then follow the salutations of others. But even Timotheus is "my workfellow." What unfeigned humility and brotherly love!

As Paul commended the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx.), so here he says, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest [and by prophetic scriptures—New Translation], according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith. To God only wise be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen."

Yes, God is able to stablish all believers accord-

ing to that which Paul calls "my gospel," my glad tidings. The glad tidings committed to Paul have a wide range. The solid foundation of those glad tidings we have seen unfolded in this Epistle —the righteousness of God revealed in justifying the ungodly—both as to sins, up to chapter v. 11, and also as to sin, chapter v. 12 to viii. 4. It also contains the glad tidings of deliverance from sin and law; peace with God; no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus, whether as to sins, or sin; and no possible separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

Here is also just a reference to a still further revelation, of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began. This mystery is fully explained in Ephesians iii. This was not made manifest in the scriptures of Old Testament times. How could it, since it was then kept a profound secret? But it was revealed by prophetic scriptures, that is, of the New Testament. It is, however, remarkable how soon that heavenly mystery was lost, and Christendom went back to an earthly Judaism. It not only put itself under law for righteousness, but set up a worldly church government, in imitation of Judaism; so that soon all trace of the church, as seen in scripture, was lost for long ages. Such is man. He has always become foolish; all his wisdom is folly.

The closing words of the Epistle direct us not to man, or to what calls itself the church, but

"To God only wise be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen." However man has failed; however the church may fail as a testimony for God on earth; God shall be eternally glorified, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

C. S.

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